



Home Upgrade
Energy Upgrade California®



6 Questions to Ask Your Contractor

Are you choosing a participating contractor in the Energy Upgrade California® Home Upgrade incentive program? To find a professional you're comfortable with, ask these interview questions when they visit your home. An industry rule of thumb is to get estimates from three different contractors.

1. How many Home Upgrade jobs have you performed on homes like mine? (same age, size, or style) In what ways did you help solve those homeowners' problems?

Why it matters: All Home Upgrade participating contractors have the required skills and experience, including licensing, training, and certification. But it's important to hear how a contractor was able to solve their customers' problems. If the contractor can share stories of similar homes he or she worked on—improving comfort and health, saving energy or money—then you can feel more confident that he or she is a good choice for your project.

2. How will you determine what my home needs, and what solutions are best for me?

Why it matters: One of the underlying principles of the Home Upgrade program is that there are no one-size-fits-all solutions. Each home should be assessed to determine what specific issues are causing your discomfort, and to address all your needs.

Contractors should be able to explain clearly how they will determine the needs of your home, and how their proposed solutions will address those needs. Contractors will perform an energy audit using special tests to pressurize your house and find air leaks as well as inspect your attic, your duct system, and your heating and air system and base their recommendations on known building science methods.

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3. How will you ensure that the job is done right?

Why it matters: You want to feel confident that the quality of work is high and that your contractor is leaving you with a more efficient home that saves you money. Tip: A good way to ensure quality is to ask for a written scope of work (it may also be called a contract, proposal, or agreement). Make sure that everything that you want to be addressed in the job is clearly written out.

You can also take comfort in knowing that in order for Home Upgrade rebates to be approved, the Home Upgrade team performs a file review of each job to verify that what is being proposed is accurate and reasonable. In addition, we perform random oversight inspections after jobs are completed. Contractors know this and are careful to perform quality installations.

4. Do you offer financing?

Why it matters: You shouldn't have to tap your savings to pay for home upgrades—there are great financing options available. Financing makes good sense for home upgrades because you end up with lower utility bills that help offset your monthly loan payments. Home upgrades are a smart investment. Ask your contractor what financing they offer.

5. Can you walk me through the steps of how a Home Upgrade project works?

Why it matters: Contractors should be able to explain to you the steps of a given project so that you feel comfortable and educated about what's coming next. The project steps should include safety testing, presenting you with options to solve your problem, and how you will receive your rebate. Contractors should also discuss possible inspections after the job is completed to verify quality of work.

Why is the Home Upgrade approach right for me?

- Why it matters:** If you read Home Upgrade brochures or the website pages, you'll come across the term "whole-house approach" to energy efficiency. In short, it means that a contractor looks at your house as a system and proposes complete solutions to problems like rooms that are too hot or cold, drafty room, high utility bills, etc. Ask contractors to explain this concept and how it fits with your situation. Using the whole-house approach and Home Upgrade typically leads to better performing homes—and happier homeowners.
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