

ULTIMATE GUIDE TO HIRING A BOSTON COMMERCIAL PAINTER
CertaPro Painters® of the South Shore and Boston

CONTENTS

There are many reasons to hire a Commercial Painter for your Boston-area business or property. This guide will help you understand the process and help you narrow down your choice of contractors.

You'll learn:

Chapter 1: What is the difference between a "Commercial Painter" and a "regular painter?"

In this chapter we'll explore the following topics:

- The reasons a business would have to hire a Commercial Painter versus a "regular" (residential) house painter.
- The different skills a Commercial Painter can provide vs. a Residential House Painter
- Several examples of jobs where a Commercial Painter would be a better choice than a Residential painter

Chapter 2: How to find a list of Boston area Commercial Painters that would be best for your type of commercial painting project

You'll learn about how to best find a Commercial Painter from the following places:

- **Internet reviews** - which ones to trust and why
- **Word of mouth** - who to ask for a referral if you don't know anyone who has used a Commercial Painter in the Boston area before
- **Internet searches** - how to discern between a residential painter and a commercial painter on the internet and what search terms should you include in your Google Search.

Chapter 3. Questions to ask a commercial painter

This chapter will cover:

- The importance of **setting up an "apples-to-apples" spec** off of all Boston Commercial Painters can then structure their bids.
- **9 crucial questions to ask the commercial painter** in the quoting stage (This is a printable PDF that you can keep handy)
- **Invoicing considerations** if you are splitting the cost with different tenants or businesses.

Chapter 4: Special and "secret" services a Commercial Painter (may) Offer

You'll learn some "secret" services that your Commercial Painter may offer **if you know to ask about them (many of them at no additional charge!)** including:

- **Rush jobs** to meet a tight deadline.
- **Adding you to their insurance policy as "additional insured"** at no additional cost to you.
- The months of the year where most Boston Commercial Painters are so slow they'll **discount the project 20%**.
- **Night and weekend work** so your business isn't disrupted during working hours.
- **"One stop shopping services" such as carpentry** teams that can fix rotted wood before the paint is applied, so you don't have to hire a separate contractor before you paint.
- **Color consultation** by a Boston area designer so the colors you are painting are on-trend and match with your property's current furnishings
- **A written warranty and a structured warranty process.**
- **Payment terms** that can be negotiated up front.
- **Specialized coatings** to be sure the paint lasts as long as possible.
- **Paint application methods for commercial jobs** (hint: brushing and rolling might cost you more!).
- **A dedicated Job Site Supervisor AND Field Supervisor** for the project so you are not managing the painting project yourself.
- Why having a great **relationship with the Project Manager** at the Boston-area Commercial Painting Contractor is the most important part of your satisfaction.
- Chapter 4 includes a **Printable PDF checklist** so you have a list of special services handy during the quoting phase of the project when it's easy to "throw a few special services in for free."

Chapter 5: How much will it cost to hire a Commercial Painter in the Boston area?

In this chapter you'll learn:

- **Commercial painting pricing vs. residential painting pricing** that's specific to the Boston area.
- **3 secret ways most painters can save you money if you just ask** on your Boston-area Commercial Painting Project.
- Why it's **less expensive to hire a professional Boston Commercial Painter than have your employees paint for you.**
- Ways to **reduce the cost of your painting project without sacrificing quality.**
- **The number of bids you should get**
- Why some bids are **so much higher (or lower) than others.**
- **Pricing techniques** Commercial Painting Contractors use to land your commercial painting project.
- How much should **add-ons cost** after the job starts.
- Why you should almost **never agree to pay "time and materials" for a job.**
- **Scams** to watch out for in your quote.
- What a **good quote "looks like."**
- **Deposits and progress payments**

Chapter 6: What kind of warranty should my Commercial Painting Contractor include?

If you've never hired a Commercial Painter before, you may not know to ask about a warranty on the painting. If your paint peels (it happens!) your Commercial Painter should return and fix the issue.

You'll learn the following in this chapter:

- Why paint that peels may happen even with the best Boston-area Commercial Painting Contractors.
- How long does the ideal warranty cover you from "failing" paint.
- The "why" behind typical Commercial paint failures.
- Why you should ask for references of customers who have actually taken advantage of the warranty before you hire a painting contractor
- How the Boston climate adds to the need for a solid written painting warranty.
- What's typically covered in a Boston-area Commercial Painting warranty, and what's "normally" excluded.
- The importance of a WRITTEN warranty and the longevity of a Commercial Painting Contractor's track record in business..

Chapter 7: Getting references from your Boston-area Commercial Painting Contractor

- Using LinkedIn to get references from people who hire Commercial Painting Contractors all the time in the Boston area.
- Do online reviews count? (Hint: There may not be enough reviews to make this your primary source of references for your Commercial Painting project).
- Asking for references from other companies and property managers who have taken advantage of the Boston-area Commercial Painting Contractor's written warranty.
- Why the BBB is not the place to count on anymore for references.

Chapter 8: Licenses, certifications, insurance and safety protocols a Commercial Painting Contractor needs to have to work in Massachusetts.

Because you want to be safe, you'll need to make sure your Boston area Commercial Painter has the correct licenses and insurances to work in Massachusetts and New England. We'll give you a handy PDF checklist that you can print so you can ensure your Commercial Painting Contractor has:

- **A RRP or EPA lead certification** if they are working on buildings that are built before 1978 or are known to contain lead.
- **An insurance policy that is in force and is paid up** (hint: some smaller painters don't pay their insurance bill so while they have a Certificate of Insurance to show you, they may have no actual insurance!)
- **An umbrella insurance policy** that is high enough to cover damages caused by the Commercial Painting Contractor
- **A General Contractor's license** if they are doing work for you other than just painting.
- Checking any **safety violations with OSHA.**
- **A written and consistently used safety program** (hint: many painting contractors SAY they have a program, but in the day-to-day grind of painting, never actually use them).
- All of the Boston-area Commercial Painting Contractor's license and insurance information should be **on the quote and/or on their website** and easily confirmable.

Chapter 9: What's next?

- **Now that you've built your foundation of knowledge of Commercial Painting in the Boston region, you can:**
 - Print off a **handy PDF of this whole guide** so you can refer to our checklist and tips throughout the process of hiring a commercial painting contractor.
 - Contact your first Boston Commercial Painting Contractor for your first quote.

Chapter 1

The difference between a Commercial painter and a “regular” Residential house painter?

In order to start “at the beginning” it is important to discern between a Commercial Painter and a Residential Painter.

A Commercial Painter specializes in painting large painting projects for:

- Property Managers
- Businesses
- Specific Industries

Because businesses have different painting needs than residential customers do, a Commercial Painting Contractor is set up to meet these special needs better than a residential painter would be able to. Take a look at this chart for an easy to understand comparison of a “good” Boston Commercial Painter versus a “good” Boston Residential Painter. Also, it’s important to understand that some Contractors do both Commercial and Residential painting, but have separate “departments” for each type of work.

Painting Service	Good Commercial Painter	Good Residential Painter
Off-hours work (nights/weekends)	Yes	?
Updated insurance, licenses and safety protocol	Yes	?
Rush jobs	Yes	?
In house carpenters	Yes	?
In house scheduling department that works with YOUR schedule.	Yes	?
Understanding of specialized paint coatings (scuff-proof, antimicrobial, metal coatings, epoxy etc.)	Yes	?
Payment terms that fit your accounting department’s needs and payment timeframe	Yes	?
Can spray both interiors and exteriors to save time and money.	Yes	?
Written warranty and warranty process	Yes	?
Color consulting	Yes	?

References from current and previous customers	Yes	?
Dedicated project manager and Job Site Supervisor for the duration of your project	Yes	?
Returns calls quickly before the project starts (within 1 working day)	Yes	?
Returns calls quickly during the project (within 1 hour)	Yes	?
Explains painting terms in plain English so you understand exactly what you're paying for.	Yes	?
Do they own or have access to renting the correct equipment (lifts, scaffolding, staging, ladders, etc?)	Yes	?
Do they use and specify on your quote reputable brands and grades of paint (Sherwin Williams and Benjamin Moore come to mind)?	Yes	?
Is the upfront quoting process easy (this is often a "preview" of how the final job will be handled)	Yes	?
Are the painters in uniform so tenants and employees know who's working?	Yes	?
Can the Commercial Painting contractor help communicate with tenants, owners and employees WHEN the work will be happening in their area/department so they can plan for it? (door hangers hung on apartment doors, email with timeline provided to Property Manager etc.)	Yes	?

The following are types of jobs that would be best served using a Commercial Painting Contractor:

- Homeowners Associations (HOAs) where multiple building owners have a stake in the outcome of the project.
- Condominium complexes.
- Large and small exterior and interior projects for a business - especially if the business needs to stay open during the painting process.
- Specialized businesses such as dental & medical offices, software companies and hospitals that may have delicate equipment that needs protection from paint and dust.

- Businesses that are on a tight timeframe and need to be sure the painter shows up the day they are supposed to.
- Businesses that are doing a remodeling project where painting is just one piece of the project and must fall into the timeline of other trades such as electricians, plumbers and flooring companies.

How to find an (excellent) Commercial Painter in the Boston-area

Finding an excellent Commercial Painter requires knowing what to look for that makes them “excellent.”

Now that you know the services that a Commercial Painter should provide, let’s spend some time outlining a method for you to find some decent Commercial Painter candidates for your project in the Boston metro area.

1. **LinkedIn:** While you may not know any people who use a Commercial Painter on a regular basis personally, your network of colleagues surely does. Look for 1st and 2nd connections in the following industries and reach out to ask them who they use and who they would recommend (or not recommend) as a Commercial Painting Contractor in the Boston area:
 - **Property Managers** handle the maintenance of condominiums, apartment complexes, and other large residential and commercial buildings. For example, a Property Manager might award a Commercial Painter the painting of 250 decks and porches in a Condominium Complex on the North Shore.
 - **Facility Managers** handle maintenance and painting for large facilities like YMCAs, office buildings and warehouses etc.
2. **Internet searches:** While you’re likely to know to Google the phrase “Painters near me,” here are some more phrases that will help you search for the best Boston area Commercial Painting Company on the internet:

What you might need in a Commercial Painter	Google this search term:
A local Boston area Painter	“Best Boston Commercial Painting Contractor”
Night and weekend work	“Boston Commercial Painter that does night and weekend work”
Help with colors for your Commercial Painting Project	“Commercial Painting color consultation in Boston MA”
A painter with good online reviews	“Boston Commercial Painting contractor online reviews”

You get the idea!	
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Chapter 3

How to compare Commercial Painting Contractors

Assuming you've done your homework and have three Commercial Painters you're considering, here's how to make sure they give you a quote that will be helpful in discerning the difference between Commercial Painting Contractors.

“Apples-to-apples” quoting of prices:

Make sure the specifications you give to each Commercial Painting Company are exactly the same. This cannot be stressed too much. If one company assumes 1 coat of paint and another Commercial Painter assumes 2 coats, you will not be able to accurately compare the prices and what's included on the quotes.

Never give a Commercial Painter a “peek” at the other company's pricing (unless you are seriously rooting for the company that gets a peek). At this stage, it's important that you let the Commercial Painting estimators show you what they are made of. If they can accurately produce a quote, it's likely that they can accurately produce the painting project.

It's not uncommon at this stage for the Commercial Painting estimator to reach back out to you to clarify the scope of painting work or ask other project-related questions. This shows that they are doing their best to get the quote right.

8 Questions to ask a commercial painter you're considering to hire.

Here are 8 questions to consider asking at the quoting stage:

1. **Here are 8 questions to consider asking at the quoting stage:**

- Exactly **what's included** in the painting quote
- Exactly **what's excluded** in the quote
- **When** the Commercial Painting Company can start the project
- For larger projects, **how the project will be “staged”** so that it is organized in smaller “stages.”

- The **exact paint and coatings** the Commercial Painting Contractor will be using to complete each part of the project. This might mean different types of paint for different parts of the project. For example, a different coating should be specified for pipes versus window sills.
 - Any **carpentry that's needed** before painting begins should be specified and priced
 - **Exact payment terms and deposit requirements.** At the very least, you should be able to negotiate a 25% deposit, 50% progress payment and a final payment 30 days after the project is finished.
 - A written warranty that outlines the time period for the warranty for as well as what's included and excluded from the warranty.
2. Do you have a **color consultant** on staff to help me choose colors?
- Related: Can you provide computer renderings of different color schemes before painting begins so we can envision the space.
3. What **specialized paint coatings do you recommend** for my Commercial Painting Project? (Scuff-resistant, low-VOC, anti-microbial, epoxy, DTM Direct to Metal)
4. Can your company handle **fixing rotted wood** before you paint, or do I need to find my own carpenter? This is especially important to know for Boston-area wooden exteriors that have wood rot due to the wet, harsh New England climate.
5. Can you **work off-hours (weekends and nights)** so my business can stay open during the painting? Is there a surcharge for this?
6. When does your billing department **invoice the deposit, progress payments and final payments**?
7. What kind of **warranty** do you offer? Is it written? Is anything **excluded from the warranty**?
8. Can I get **references from three of your Clients** who have done similar projects AND **one customer who has had you return to complete warranty work for them.**
- Related: A great way to check references is to send an email to the reference with the following request:
 - *"I am asking for a reference for a Commercial Painting project I'm thinking of doing with ABC Commercial Painting Company. If you think they can do a fantastic job, please email me back with your thoughts. If you don't think they can do a fantastic job, you can ignore this message."*

Comparing Invoicing and payment terms considerations

Some Commercial Painting Contractors will have different payment terms than others. Check up front about the payment terms so there are no surprises when you are asked to pay "upon completion."

If you need to invoice several tenant or homeowners for the work, now is the time to tell the Painting Contractor your needs.

Chapter 4:

Special and "secret" services a Commercial Painter Might Offer (Some of these are 100% free if you know to ask!)

Now that you've got down that basics and the lingo of Commercial Painting, you might ask the Commercial Painting Company if they offer any of the following services.

Most of these should be at no additional cost to you unless otherwise stated below.

- **Rush jobs** to meet a tight deadline. Usually no additional cost.
 - Many good Commercial Painters know that rush jobs happen. A Client's boss is coming and that peeling wall needs to be painted. Fast. In many cases Commercial Painters in the Boston area often have a "rush painting crew" in order to help a good or new Client out of a pickle.

- **Adding you or your company to their insurance policy as "additional insured"** at no additional cost to you.
 - Most reputable Commercial Painting Contractors have **robust and expensive insurance**. By adding you or your company as "additional insured" this protects you from a painter that hands you a Certificate of Insurance that looks like it's unexpired, only to find out that they haven't paid their insurance bill and the policy has lapsed.
 - **All insurance certificates should be emailed to you DIRECTLY from the insurance company** and not handed or emailed to you by the Commercial Painter. This is so you can be sure the certificate of insurance is not tampered with or altered to contain false or misleading information.
 - As an "additional insured" company on the painter's insurance policy, you are also able to spot-check the painter's insurance to make sure it's in force AND be contacted by mail if the policy lapses (this often is slow though, so it's best to spot-check that the policy is in force every time you start a new project.)

- Because Commercial Painters paint both exteriors and interiors, the winter months (especially January and February in Boston) are "slow" because exteriors cannot be painted in the cold weather. This means most Commercial Painting Contractors have more than enough painters ready to **paint interiors in the wintertime and are happy to discount it 20%** from their high season prices.

- You can **ask your Commercial Painter to work overnight or on the weekends** in order to keep your business running smoothly during the day. This should be added at no extra charge to you.

- **See if your painter offers "one stop shopping services" such as carpentry** teams that can fix rotted wood before the paint is applied, so you don't have to hire a separate contractor before you paint.

- It's not uncommon for a Commercial Painter to give you a quote to fix wood-rot with the caveat that they might come across more as the work on the exterior. It's almost impossible to find every shingle or trim board that needs fixing unless painters are at work, on ladders 'feeling' all of the wood for rot.
- **Color consultation** is often offered as free service to be sure the color of the interior walls matches the company's current furnishings. This is often at no charge to you, but is not offered by many Commercial Painting Contractors in Boston in our experience.
- You want to make sure to see a formal **written warranty and a structured warranty process**. Paint does "fail" (peeling, bubbling and blistering) and usually fails within the first 6 months of application. This is never a problem and can always be fixed, but if you can't get your Commercial Painting Contractor to come back to fix it, you're going to be out more money fixing it with another company - not a good position to be in.
- You are likely able to **negotiate payment terms up front** that fit your budget and cash flow.
- **Specialized coatings** to be sure the paint lasts as long as possible.
- Ask about **spraying as a way to apply paint in a faster and more cost-effective** way as brushing and rolling. Often spraying a commercial building offers a great and long lasting finish for a fraction of what it would cost to roll the same number of square feet. .
- **Make sure the Commercial Painting Company assures you that a dedicated Job Site Supervisor AND Field Supervisor will be at your project** so you are not managing the painting project yourself.
- Developing a relationship with your project manager is crucial to companies that have more than one painting job each year. A deep and personal relationship with the your project manager might allow for some "freebies" to be thrown in or at the very least a growing understanding of your expectations over time so you don't have to keep repeating yourself to a new estimator each time.

Chapter 5: How much will it cost to hire a Commercial Painter in the Boston area?

Commercial paint pricing is different than residential paint pricing

Commercial paint pricing per square foot is usually lower than painting a home with the same square footage. This is because Commercial Painting Companies are doing things on a larger scale and can take advantage of efficiencies in the project. This includes buying paint and supplies in bulk and the fact that the painting crew gets faster and better the longer the project takes.

Ask your Boston area Commercial Painter about these 3 "secret" ways they might be able to save you money:

1. **Perform interior work in the winter to instantly save 10-15% on the project.** The best months to negotiate a discount in the Boston area is January and February.
2. **Spraying paint on exteriors and interior will save you at least 20% over brushing and rolling.** Make sure your painter is using a gas-powered sprayer with a wide spray tip to get the best efficiencies and pricing. A gas powered sprayer will paint much faster than an electrical sprayer.

3. **Have the work done while the building is closed over a holiday weekend.** This will save the labor cost because the painting crew can leave their supplies in place and be ready to go the next morning without having to set up and clean up every night.

It's less expensive to hire a Commercial Painter than have your own employees do the work for you because:

- Unless your employees are professional painters, they have no knowledge about organizing, staging and producing a commercial painting project. A non-professional will end up taking double or triple the time as a professional Commercial Painting Contractor on the same project.
- The extra time they take to complete the painting may have an effect on the foot traffic allowed in the building and could decrease your sales, revenue or production capacity for that period.
- You will need to buy the equipment and most power washers, sprayers and lifts have a steep learning curve.
- Your price for paint will be higher because most Commercial Painting Contractors get rock-bottom pricing because they buy in bulk so often.
- You will be paying your employees their normal wages during the project, and the end result is likely to look less professional (think drips and amateur wall patching).

If cost is a big consideration, here are some ideas to help reduce the cost:

- Match the current paint color instead of changing colors. By doing this you can often be fine with only one coat of paint versus two if you're changing colors.
- Perform interior work in January and February when most Boston Commercial Painting Companies are slower and can offer a discount on the project.
- Ask for a quote with minimal preparation - this means only large imperfections will be addressed and smaller ones will be left.
- Choosing a scuff-resistant paint adds to the cost up front, but saves money in the long run by resulting in a paint job that lasts for years beyond normal paint.

How many bids should I get?

You should get at least 3 bids for your project. Make sure all of the quotes are using the exact same specifications so you know you are looking at an "apples-to-apples" comparison when the quotes are side by side.

Why are some of the Commercial bids I got from different Boston Commercial Painting Companies so different in price?

Price differences between Boston area Commercial Painting Companies can vary because:

- The specifications and assumptions of the bid are different. For example, one Commercial Painter might be basing the cost on 1 coat of paint, while another might be specifying 2 coats. This is why getting the exact specifications correct and up front is so important - so all of your commercial painting candidates are on the same page before they submit their quotes.

- Larger companies get a better deal on paint prices, and may be able to price the project lower than a smaller Commercial painting company.
- If you are a business owner with lots of future painting projects, a new Commercial Painter may price the job lower just to get their foot in the door with future bids.
- Be aware that some contractors are purposefully loose with the detail in their quotes, not stating exactly what they'll be doing on the proposal. This leaves a lot of room for interpretation and if you use a contractor that does this, you may find yourself with dozens of add ons and change orders because things that you thought were included, aren't included.
- Just like car companies have entry level and luxury lines of cars, reputable paint companies, such as Benjamin Moore and Sherwin Williams have different GRADES of paint within their brands.
 - This is important because if a quote specifies "Benjamin Moore Paint" - it could be talking about it's cheapest and least effective grade of paint within the Benjamin Moore product line.
 - You want to know the BRAND AND GRADE of paint - something like "Sherwin Williams Resilience" or "Benjamin Moore Regal" is a correct description of the type of paint your Boston Commercial Painter has specified for your project. With only the brand of paint specified, you could be getting a very inexpensive and low quality paint.

Project add-ons (often called "change orders"):

During most Commercial Painting projects, add ons to the original scope of work need to be quoted. Many Commercial Painting contractors depend on these add ons as the main source of their profit, especially if they priced the job low in order to win the work.

Add ons should be billed at the same rate as the original work. Ask your Commercial Painting Contractor their hourly rate and then how long the add-on will take and what the material cost is. Here's your formula for add ons:

(Hourly rate X Number of hours) + materials (paint/wood etc.)

Do not accept "time and materials" bids:

Always ask for a quote for the work up front. A good Commercial Painter will know how long it will take them to complete the work in hours and how much the materials will cost.

If you agree to "time and materials" you will be caught babysitting the crew to make sure they are "really working" the hours they say they are. Bidding by "time and materials" is fraught with misunderstandings and often ends up with the customer paying much more than they were planning to.

If you must pay by "time and materials" make sure there is a cap on the time and amount of money they spend on materials, so you're not surprised by the price.

What is included in a decent Commercial Painting Quote?

You will want to make sure the following elements are included in your quote. Without some or all of these elements, the details of the quote will leave too much open for interpretation, and you might possibly be on a different page than the Commercial Painter you hire:

- **The name and address of the person and/or company hiring the Commercial Painter (A)**

- **The job site address (B).** The job site can be different than the address above if a property manager, for example, is hiring a Boston-area Commercial painter to paint at a Condominium Complex in another town in which his office is located.
- A detailed description of the project details including but not limited to:
 - The goal of the project { C }
 - The brand of paint included in the price of the quote { } - this should be specified for all areas (walls, ceiling, shutters, doors, stucco exterior) the Commercial Painter will be applying paint
 - The grade of paint included in the price of the quote { }
 - A description of all of the set up and clean up included in the quote { }
 - A description of special issues to be aware of, for example, “do not park painting vans in any condominium resident spaces” or “painters need to do a full clean up each evening in the copy room.”
 - The written warranty that describes how long the paint is warranted against failure, and what areas are excluded from the warranty. For example, deck floorboards because people walk on them and wear the paint away quickly are often not covered under most warranties.
- The Boston Painting Contractor’s Massachusetts license number
- The includes and excludes of the project
- The base price and any optional items that can be added to the quote if desired.
- A place where the Contractor signs the quote as well as a place where you sign and date the quote.
- Legalize that protects both you and the contractor.

Deposits and progress payments

It is common for a Commercial Painter in the Boston area to require a payment plan which includes:

- A deposit of 25-50% of the cost of the project upfront, before the project begins
- A progress payment at specified intervals during the job (usually 50% and 75%)
- Terms for final payment - (usually “due on completion” or within 10-30 days)

Chapter 6: What kind of warranty should my Commercial Painting Contractor include?

If you've never hired a Commercial Painter before, you may not know to ask about a [warranty on the painting](#). If your paint peels (it happens!) your Commercial Painter should return and fix the issue.

Help! My paint peeled after I got it professionally painted by a Boston Commercial Painting Contractor!

Peeling paint isn't common, but it does happen to even the best Commercial Painting companies in the Boston area. There are many reasons this could happen (moisture, issues with the substrate to which the paint was applied etc.), so it is important that you receive a written warranty from your Boston Commercial Painter.

What is a good length for a warranty "term?"

Since if paint is going to fail, it often does so within 6 months of application, having a 2-year warranty a good time period to ensure that if the paint fails, that the painter will come back to fix it.

Why does paint "fail" (peel, wrinkle, blister etc.)?

- Exterior paint fails most of the time because the moisture was too high in the substrate when the paint was applied. Many painting contractors in the Boston area depend on "moisture meters" - a gadget that determines if it is too wet to paint.
- Interior paint failures are less common than exterior ones, and are most commonly caused by moisture (think of a leaky toilet that causes paint to peel on the ceiling below), improper preparation of the wall surface or painting a latex paint over a surface that previously had oil paint on it.

The importance of understanding a Commercial Painting Contractor's Warranty process:

It's not only important that the warranty you receive be written, but also that the Painting Contractor have a process they follow on warranty claims. The best Contractors schedule your warranty job exactly the way they treat a new project, and don't try to put you off until you forget or give up on the claim.

- Ask for references from your Commercial Painting contractor of customers who have taken advantage of the warranty, so you can be sure the warranty is "real" and that their experience getting issues taken care of was a good one.
- The number of years a painting contractor has been in business will also play into how well they service warranty issues. Look for a painter with good online reviews over a long period of years to assess the contractor's history.

The wet, cold Boston climate makes a written painting warranty all the more important:

Like we said earlier, moisture and temperature fluctuations add to the possibility that paint will fail. Because the Boston climate is both moist and suddenly warm or cold, you need a written warranty even more.

Chapter 7: Getting references from your Boston-area Commercial Painting Contractor

You know you need references, but how do you find people to refer a Boston Commercial Painting Contractor to you?

- Use LinkedIn or Facebook to ask your network who they have hired in the past
 - If using LinkedIn, see if you can search for 1st or 2nd level contacts who have the title “Property Manager” or “Facility Manager” in their profiles. Reach out to these people (Do a Google Search to find out their email address) and ask them what Boston-area Commercial Painting Contractors they’ve had success with in the past.
 - If you find a Property or Facility Manager with some experience hiring a Commercial Painter in the Boston area, find out about their experience taking advantage of the warranty from the painter they are recommending. A smooth warranty process is an indication of a painter that stands by their work and will be around for the long haul.
 - Search LinkedIn for “Commercial Painters in the Boston Area” to get a list of people that work in the Commercial Painting industry.
- In the Boston area, try CAI New England (a network of Condominium professionals) or BOMA (a professional group of building professionals). See if they have recommendations of Commercial Painters they’ve met.
- Online reviews tend to be skewed toward residential painters, so you may not be able to use online reviews as a primary source to suss out a good Commercial Painter.
- Asking for references from other companies and property managers who have taken advantage of the Boston-area Commercial Painting Contractor’s written warranty.
- The BBB (Better Business Bureau) is not the place to place a lot of confidence as the business model of the BBB is less “government agency that makes sure consumers are happy” and more of the mode where “businesses can advertise to be included on the website.”

Chapter 8: Licenses, certifications, insurance and safety protocols a Commercial Painting Contractor needs to have to work in Massachusetts.

Because you want to be safe, you’ll need to make sure your Boston area Commercial Painter has the correct licenses and insurances to work in Massachusetts and New England.

Download this PDF checklist that you can print so you can ensure your Commercial Painting Contractor has:

- [A RRP or EPA lead certification](#) if they are working on buildings that are built before 1978 or are known or suspected to contain lead paint. This lead certification is especially important in older buildings where children will spend time such as schools and day cares so the paint chips are well-contained and don’t cause harm to a young child.
- [An insurance policy that is in force and is paid up](#) (hint: some smaller painters don’t pay their insurance bill so while they have a Certificate of Insurance to show you, they may have no actual insurance!).

- Be sure you receive the insurance certificate emailed directly from the insurance company and ask to be added as “additional insured” to the policy. This ensures the certificate isn’t tampered with by the painter and indicates the policy is in full force.
- - The insurance certificate should list both a General Liability policy and a Worker’s Compensation policy. If the painter does not carry Worker’s Compensation, this is a red flag not to hire them.
- **[An umbrella insurance policy](#)** that is high enough to cover damages caused by the Commercial Painting Contractor. Umbrella policies add coverage to the painters’ other policies up to the amount on the umbrella insurance certificate. A good rule of thumb is a \$5 million umbrella policy shows that a painter is serious about protecting their Clients, themselves and their painters.
- **[A General Contractor’s license](#)** if they are doing work for you other than just painting such as carpentry, replacing windows, building walls or installing drywall or doing general contracting.
- Check with OSHA for any safety violations the Contractor may have had.
- **A written and consistently used safety program** (hint: many painting contractors SAY they have a program, but in the day-to-day grind of painting, never actually use them).
- All of the Boston-area Commercial Painting Contractor’s license and insurance information should be **on the quote and/or on their website** and easily confirmable.
- If you need a woman-owned business to do the work in order to meet quotas for your company ensure that [the business is registered in the State of Massachusetts as a Woman-Owned Business](#).

Chapter 9: What’s next?

- **Now that you’ve built your foundation of knowledge of Commercial Painting in the Boston region, you can:**
 - Print off **this handy PDF of this whole guide** so you can refer to our checklists and tips throughout the process of hiring a commercial painting contractor.
 - Contact your first Boston Commercial Painting Contractor for your first quote.

If you would like to contact the author of this guide to quote your Commercial Painting Project and you are located in the Boston metro areas (and towns North, South and West of Boston), please email Louis NeJame at Lnejame@certapro.com. Or call 781-831-2255.