

When to hire subcontractors for your building project

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Your project might require subcontractors for specialist work, so be sure who will contract them and who will manage their building work.

Subcontractors are tradespeople hired by your main contractor to complete specialist work on your project, such as:

- roofing
- tiling
- waterproofing
- plumbing
- electrical work
- plastering
- concrete pouring
- painting
- brick work.

Usually, your builder will engage any subcontractors you may need. As the main contractor, your builder will be responsible for the quality of their work. They will report to your builder for instruction, and are employed by your builder, not you.

If you, your designer or your project manager hire tradespeople additionally to your main contractor, they are not subcontractors. They do not report to your main contractor - they report to you. They are responsible for their own work.

If you don't have a full contract with your builder, or if you have a labour-only contract, then you (or your designer or project manager) may be responsible for finding and hiring subcontractors.

Subcontractor arrangements through your builder

If your builder plans to hire subcontractors to work on your project, this should be stated in your contract with your builder.

It is common for a builder to have a pool of trusted tradespeople to choose for specialist work. Any tradesperson a builder hires is their subcontractor.

In most full contracts, your contract should also provide payment details for subcontractors. You will not need to pay your builder's subcontractors directly, as you have not employed them. Your builder will charge you for their work, and will then pay them. Check if your builder charges a fee for processing the payments for any subcontractors you may use.

Subcontractor names and corresponding work can be documented in your contract.

If you are unsure if someone is a subcontractor and you don't have a contract with them, check with your builder.

Finding contractors yourself

If your builder is not contracting the tradespeople for your project, you will need to do so. In this case, they are not called subcontractors.

Other tradespeople you hire are contractors who work alongside your main contractor, and they report to you. They should have individual

contracts with you, and you will most likely pay them directly.

Remember that most plumbing work must be carried out by a licensed or certified plumber, and new plumbing or drainage work is likely to need a consent.

Visit the [LBP public register \(https://lbp.ewr.govt.nz/publicregister/search.aspx\)](https://lbp.ewr.govt.nz/publicregister/search.aspx) on the Licensed Building Practitioner website to find a government-licensed tradesperson.

You can also check various trade organisations for a list of tradespeople, such as:

- [New Zealand Plumbers, Gasfitters and Drainlayers Board \(http://www.pgdb.co.nz/\)](http://www.pgdb.co.nz/)
- [Electrical Workers Registration Board \(http://www.ewrb.govt.nz/\)](http://www.ewrb.govt.nz/)

Make sure you explain your project to your other contractors, and let them know who your main contractor is. You will need to specify your deadlines and make sure they are aware of when work needs to be completed.

Ensure all materials or systems are ordered in good time. You want to avoid delaying your main contractor and any subcontractors. Delays usually mean additional costs.

Nominated subcontractors

If you have someone you want to do a particular part of the building work you can contract them directly or nominate them as a subcontractor. Any nominated subcontractors must be noted in your contract with the main contractor.

You will be liable for your nominated subcontractor's quality of work, regardless of whether they are contracted to you or your builder. Your main contractor will not have to organise repairs or fix work if your nominated subcontractor doesn't do a good job. You will be expected to cover the costs.

You will also have extra costs if your nominated subcontractor doesn't turn up or complete the work on time, as it can delay the whole building process.

Hiring subcontractors

Make sure you have a contract with every contractor you employ. If your builder is using subcontractors, document their names in the contract between you.

Talk to your builder about hiring contractors, payment and your understanding of each other's role.

Make sure you understand the contract you are signing, preferably getting your lawyer to check it before you sign.

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