
On the Job
Contractors
Perimeter and Area
Rane Anderson

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Build It, Fix It

Contractors are go-to people for anyone who wants to **renovate** an indoor or outdoor space. You can find them on any construction project, big or small. It is the contractor's job to bring ideas to life.

Some **clients** have unique requests. They want houses made from glass bottles and walls made from tires. They want houses built in trees and rooms hidden behind bookcases. Regardless of the request, contractors find ways to get the work done.

Most of the time, clients have much simpler requests. They might ask for a new kitchen countertop. They might need a new backyard fence. In either case, contractors are there to help. They measure spaces, buy supplies, use tools to fix problems. They might even hire other skilled workers to help. Contractors work hard to make dreams come true.



plans for a kitchen remodel



The David Wenzel Treehouse at Nay Aug Park in Pennsylvania, overlooks a gorge from 150 feet (46 meters) above.

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Prepping for the Job

Contractors must be ready to take on any challenge. One frequent request from clients is deck repair. First, contractors must gather information and plan what they want to do. That means they must inspect the space. By doing so, contractors can figure out the exact repairs that must be done.

Perhaps the wood is in good shape, but the paint is old. In that case, **refinishing** might be the answer. Or, a few boards might be damaged. Those can be replaced. If too many boards need to be replaced, a contractor might suggest building a new deck in its place. Perhaps the deck appears unstable. No one wants a deck to collapse while they are standing on it! In this instance, the deck's braces and posts must be checked. Contractors will then decide the best way to fix the problem.







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Contractors love to give good news to clients. In one case, a client's deck may be stable and safe. But, its floor needs to be refinished. And the top of the railing around three sides of the deck may be rotted. It needs to be replaced.

The contractor takes out a tape measure and measures some lengths. This is a vital part of the job. And doing this wrong could mean wasting a lot of time or money. It could result in a bad **reputation**.

While measuring the railing, the contractor is sure to write a **linear unit**. If the contractor buys from a lumberyard that sells lumber by the foot, the contractor will order using that unit.

The contractor's next step is to measure the floor to plan for the correct amount of stain. For this, **square units** are used.

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LET'S EXPLORE MATH

While preparing an **estimate**, a contractor sketches a deck so that needed measurements can be recorded. One side of the deck does not need a railing because the house is there.

1. How many feet of lumber does the contractor need to buy for the railing?
2. How many square feet of the deck's floor will need to be covered by stain?
3. What is the difference between the linear units used to measure the railing and the square units used to measure the floor?

