

First-Hire Readiness Checklist for Contractors

Use this checklist before hiring your first employee, helper, installer, technician, or office admin.

1. Confirm four to six months of repeat demand, not a short seasonal spike.
2. Calculate true labor cost: wage plus payroll taxes, workers comp, insurance, tools, truck, and supervision time.
3. Decide whether the role is field labor, apprentice/helper, office admin, scheduler, estimator, or crew lead.
4. Write the first 30 days of responsibilities in plain English.
5. Set minimum quality standards for cleanup, customer communication, photos, notes, and callbacks.
6. Prepare EIN, payroll software, I-9, W-4, state new-hire reporting, workers comp, and labor posters.
7. Build an onboarding checklist for day 1, week 1, and the first 30 days.
8. Create a scorecard: attendance, callbacks, production, customer feedback, and margin impact.
9. Price jobs with the new labor burden before the hire starts.
10. Do not hire to fix bad pricing, weak scheduling, or chaotic operations. Fix the system first.

Rule of thumb: if one hire would make you busier but not more profitable, you are not ready yet.