

How to Choose and Vet a Sauna or Wellness Room Builder

A step-by-step method to compare sauna, steam room and cold plunge builders: check licences, insurance, references, written quotes and payment terms before you sign.

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A private wellness room joins carpentry, electrical work, plumbing and ventilation in one small space. A mistake in one trade can damage the others. This guide gives a method to compare builders before you sign a contract.

1. Know which type of business you need

| Business type | Typical scope | |---|---| | Dealer | Sells kits, cabins, heaters or plunge units. May offer assembly. | | Installer | Assembles kits and connects equipment. Often works with a separate electrician. | | Custom builder | Designs and builds the room on site, from framing to finish. | | Designer or architect | Plans the space and specifies products. Does not usually build. |

A kit price is not a project price. Steam & Oak, a UK dealer, says that a quote for a cabin price alone "is not quoting the job". Ask each firm which trades it does itself and which trades it subcontracts.

2. Check licences in your market

- **United Kingdom.** A builder who belongs to a competent person scheme can self-certify some building work, such as fixed electrical installations in dwellings. You then do not need to get building regulations approval yourself.
- **Ontario, Canada.** Licensed Electrical Contractors are the only businesses that can be hired to do electrical work in a home. They have a seven-digit ECRA/ESA licence number. Ask to see it before you hire.
- **New South Wales, Australia.** Use the Verify NSW website to check a builder's licence. Work over \$5,000 needs a written contract. Work over \$20,000 needs Home Building Compensation Fund insurance before the builder takes any payment.
- **United States.** Licence rules differ by state. The Texas Attorney General tells homeowners to ask for references and to check that a worker holds any licence the state requires.

For other markets, ask the builder which licences the work needs. Then check each licence with the issuing body.

3. Check insurance

Ask for proof of liability insurance. The Ontario ESA warns that an insurer may deny a claim linked to work by an unlicensed contractor. Keep copies of all certificates.

4. Look at past work

Ask for photographs and references from recent projects of the same type. A sauna, a steam room and a cold plunge need different skills. HomeGuide suggests that you ask how many steam rooms a firm has installed. Ask to speak to past clients.

5. Compare written quotes

Get at least three written quotes. Ask each firm to price the same scope. A full quote names:

- The product, the heater or generator model and its size.
- The electrical circuit and any panel upgrade.
- The base, framing, insulation, vapour barrier and ventilation.
- Permits and inspections, and who applies for them.
- The timeline and the warranty.

HomeGuide also suggests that you ask what the installation fee does not include.

6. Read the contract and the payment terms

The Texas Attorney General says the contract must state what the contractor will do, when the work will start and when it will finish. Do not let anyone rush you into signing. Do not pay in full until the work is complete and you have inspected it. Link each payment to a finished stage of work.

7. Check that the plan follows the manufacturer

The heater or generator instructions control many details. For example, the manual for the Harvia KIP heater says the heater must not connect to a GFI breaker. The Mr. Steam generator manual says a qualified, licensed electrician and plumber must do the installation. Ask the builder to show you the manual for each unit. Ask how the plan follows it.

Red flags

- The firm will not give a written, itemised quote.
- The firm asks you to get the permits, or says permits are not necessary, and cannot explain why.
- The firm cannot show a licence number.
- The firm asks for full payment before work starts.

Compare builders, dealers and installers near you in our directory.

Sources

- [Steam & Oak: Sauna installation UK](#) (29 August 2026, fetched 2026-10-29)
- [GOV.UK: Competent person scheme, current schemes](#) (fetched 2026-10-29)
- [GOV.UK: Building regulations approval](#) (fetched 2026-10-29)

- [Electrical Safety Authority: Finding the right contractor](#) (fetched 2026-10-29)
- [NSW Government: Step-by-step guide to choosing the right tradesperson or builder](#) (fetched 2026-10-29)
- [Legal Aid NSW: Builders and contractors](#) (fetched 2026-10-29)
- [Texas Attorney General: How to avoid home improvement scams](#) (fetched 2026-10-29)
- [HomeGuide: How much does a sauna cost?](#) (fetched 2026-10-29)
- [HomeGuide: How much does a steam room cost?](#) (fetched 2026-10-29)
- [Harvia: KIP heater owner's and operator's manual](#) (fetched 2026-10-29)
- [Mr. Steam: Steambath generator installation, operation and maintenance manual](#) (fetched 2026-10-29)

Frequently asked questions

How many quotes should I get?

Get written quotes from at least three firms. Ask each firm for the same scope. Ask each firm to explain the difference in price.

Can my general contractor do the electrical work for a sauna?

It depends on where you live. In Ontario, the Electrical Safety Authority says general contractors are not licensed to do electrical work. They must hire a Licensed Electrical Contractor.

How large a deposit is normal?

Rules differ by country and state. In New South Wales, the maximum deposit on home building contracts over \$5,000 is 10% of the contract price. Elsewhere, keep the deposit small and link payments to finished stages of work.