

SUMMIT COUNTY HOMEOWNER'S GUIDE

5 Ways to Avoid Remodeling Disaster in Summit County

The costly mistakes homeowners make when hiring a contractor — and how to make sure none of them happen to you.

A Free Guide from Natural Builders

Founded 2016 · Licensed & Insured · Only 5-Star Reviews on Google



INTRODUCTION

The Contractor Problem in Summit County

Summit County is one of the most beautiful — and most expensive — places to own property in Colorado. A remodeling project here isn't a minor home improvement. It's a significant investment in a high-value asset, often managed from a distance, in a market where unreliable contractors are a well-known hazard.

Most homeowners who get burned don't see it coming. The contractor sounded confident. The price looked reasonable. Then the surprises started — a budget that quietly grew, subs who didn't show, calls that went unreturned, finish work that didn't match what was promised.

This guide covers the five most common remodeling disasters in Summit County, what the wrong contractor looks like in each scenario, and what it looks like when a contractor actually operates by principle — not just promise.

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OUR COMMITMENT

Five Principles. Every Project. No Exceptions.

Every standard in this guide maps directly to one of Natural Builders' five core principles. These aren't aspirational values posted on a wall — they are the operating standard every team member is held to, reviewed on, and rewarded for living. When you hire Natural Builders, you're hiring a company that puts real consequences behind these commitments.

Team Up	We win together, we solve problems together, and we help each other succeed.
Dig Deep	Our effort speaks for itself. We are devoted to quality and it shows.
Own the Details	Every commitment is personal. If it matters to you, it matters to us.
Walk the Talk	If we say it, we do it. We don't promise what we can't deliver.
Stand Out	Better every day. Better for the community. Better for the environment.

★★★★★

"Any homeowner choosing to work with them will be very pleased and extremely satisfied. Ben and the crew will exceed any expectations that you have for a project."

— Google Review — Verified Client

DISASTER #1

The Budget Blindside: When the Price Grows Without Warning

You agreed on a number. You planned around it. Then, somewhere between demo and drywall, the project quietly became something different — and nobody warned you it was coming.

■ THE WRONG CONTRACTOR

How the wrong contractor does it

The original estimate was lean to win the bid. Allowances were set unrealistically low. Change orders were handled verbally — ‘we’ll figure it out at the end.’ By the time the final invoice arrived, the project was 20–30% over what you expected, and nothing was in writing to dispute it.

✓ NATURAL BUILDERS

How Natural Builders does it

Every proposal is line-itemed by trade. Allowances are specified with dollar amounts. Every scope change is priced, documented, and approved in writing before the work begins. Walk the Talk means we do not promise what we cannot deliver — and we proactively share bad news rather than waiting for you to ask.

“The bid was detailed with each type of work listed and its cost. Ben was quick to get back to us and very professional.”

— Google Review — Verified Client

DISASTER #2

The Vanishing Sub: When the Crew Stops Showing Up

In Summit County, subcontractor availability is one of the most real constraints in remodeling. The right contractor plans for it. The wrong one hopes for the best — and your project pays the price.

■ THE WRONG CONTRACTOR

How the wrong contractor does it

They lined up subs they'd never worked with before. Nobody confirmed availability before mobilizing. The tile setter was double-booked. The electrician had a bigger job come up. Your project sat idle for two weeks with no update, and the contractor wasn't returning calls.

✓ NATURAL BUILDERS

How Natural Builders does it

Pre-qualified, trusted trade partners with established working relationships. Availability confirmed before the schedule is set. Own the Details means we come prepared — every trade is confirmed, every commitment tracked. When a trade is delayed, you hear about it proactively.

"Natural Builders has done a LOT of work for us — kitchen remodel, flooring, decks, and countless small projects. Always professional. Always prepared."

— Google Review — Repeat Client

DISASTER #3

The Communication Blackout: When You're Left in the Dark

Many Summit County homeowners are managing their property remotely. When a contractor goes quiet, there's no way to know what's happening — or what isn't. That's not just frustrating. It's a liability.

■ THE WRONG CONTRACTOR

How the wrong contractor does it

Texts go unanswered for days. You find out the permit was delayed because you called the county yourself. The cabinets are on a three-week backorder and you're the last to know. You feel like a nuisance for asking about your own renovation.

✓ NATURAL BUILDERS

How Natural Builders does it

A defined communication cadence from day one. Unprompted status updates. We manage the job responsibly so you are never left wondering from afar. Team Up means that we work alongside you as your project unfolds and include you in the important decisions.

"Ben was very insightful and kept a line of communication open. Living in Michigan, we had to rely on Ben to stay on task — and he delivered."

— Google Review — Out-of-State Owner

DISASTER #4

The Quality Letdown: When the Work Doesn't Match the Price

At Summit County price points, finish quality isn't optional. The details matter — grout lines, paint edges, trim joints. The contractor who skips quality checkpoints is betting you won't notice until it's too late.

■ THE WRONG CONTRACTOR

How the wrong contractor does it

No formal inspection before drywall closed. No pre-paint walkthrough. The punch list turned into a second renovation. Labor hours were cut to protect margin, and it showed. By the time the problems were visible, the contractor had moved on to the next job.

✓ NATURAL BUILDERS

How Natural Builders does it

Formal quality inspections at key milestones — pre-drywall, pre-paint, and punch list. Dig Deep means we do not leave a job until it is done right, and we hold ourselves to the standard we'd want if it were our own home being built. Quality is never sacrificed for speed.

"Outstanding quality with attention to detail and precision. Very clean and professional. Meticulous and provides a high standard of workmanship. Best part is being very trustworthy!"

— Google Review — Verified Client

DISASTER #5

The Vague Contract Trap: When Nothing Is in Writing

A vague contract is not a neutral document. It protects the contractor. When disputes arise — and in remodeling, they always arise — the homeowner with a one-paragraph scope has no ground to stand on.

■ THE WRONG CONTRACTOR

How the wrong contractor does it

Two-page contract. One-paragraph scope. No inclusions list, no exclusions, no allowance amounts, no defined change order process. Every disagreement about what was included becomes a negotiation where they have the leverage and you don't.

✓ NATURAL BUILDERS

How Natural Builders does it

Detailed scope of work with inclusions, exclusions, and allowances clearly specified. Written change order process for every scope change. Own the Details means every commitment is documented — so 'done' means the same thing to everyone.

"Ben and his team came in on budget and the quality of work was above and beyond what we were expecting. Will definitely use them again!"

— Google Review — Verified Client

BEFORE YOU SIGN

The Pre-Signing Checklist

Every item below should be a confident yes before you sign any contract. A contractor operating with integrity will have no hesitation with any of these.

Credentials

- ☐ Fully licensed contractor in Summit County
- ☐ General Liability insurance certificate received and current (upon request)
- ☐ Workers' Compensation certificate received and current (upon request)

Contract & Scope

- ☐ Scope of Work is detailed — line items by trade, not a paragraph summary
- ☐ Inclusions AND exclusions are explicitly listed
- ☐ Allowances specified with dollar amounts per item
- ☐ Written change order process defined in the contract
- ☐ Payment schedule is milestone-based, not date-based
- ☐ Warranty terms stated in writing

Track Record

- ☐ References from comparable recent projects provided (upon request)
- ☐ Online reviews verified (Google, Houzz) — look for pattern not just score
- ☐ Company has been in business at least 3 years with verifiable history

Process & Communication

- ☐ Communication cadence defined — how often, what format
- ☐ Single point of contact identified for your project
- ☐ Key subcontractors availability and schedule confirmed
- ☐ Picture and video updates provided regularly through secure client portal

7 Questions to Ask Every Contractor

1**QUESTION TO ASK BEFORE YOU SIGN**

Can you walk me through your change order process — in writing?

Listen for: A clear written process where every scope change is priced and approved before work begins.

2**QUESTION TO ASK BEFORE YOU SIGN**

How do you communicate with clients during a project, and how often?

Listen for: A specific cadence — weekly updates, a portal, a dedicated point of contact.

3**QUESTION TO ASK BEFORE YOU SIGN**

Can I see an example scope of work from a similar project?

Listen for: A detailed, line-item document — not a one-paragraph description.

4**QUESTION TO ASK BEFORE YOU SIGN**

What quality inspections do you run before closing walls and before finish work?

Listen for: Named inspection checkpoints — pre-drywall, pre-paint, punch list.

5**QUESTION TO ASK BEFORE YOU SIGN**

What happens when you find something unexpected behind the walls?

Listen for: Stop, assess, document, price, get approval — before proceeding.

6**QUESTION TO ASK BEFORE YOU SIGN**

Can you provide three references from projects of similar scope in the last two years?

Listen for: Real references who answer the phone and speak to specifics.

7**QUESTION TO ASK BEFORE YOU SIGN**

What does the payment schedule look like, and what milestone does each payment correspond to?

Listen for: Milestone-based payments. No large upfront deposits without clear deliverables.

WHAT OUR CLIENTS SAY

The Highest Rated Remodeling Company in Summit County

We have worked tirelessly to build our reputation in Summit County, and it shows. Our five-star google rating speaks for itself, and it is something we are proud to say that we have earned. Our values have helped us to develop our community's trust, and we would love the opportunity to earn yours as well. Here is what homeowners — including remote owners who trusted us to manage their projects from a distance — have said in their own words:



“Great communication. Every worker we dealt with was friendly, professional, and helpful. I would highly recommend Ben and his crew to anyone.”

— Google Review — Verified Summit County Client



“Ben went above and beyond any of my expectations. Incredible, professional experience.”

— Google Review — Verified Client



“Any homeowner choosing to work with them will be very pleased and extremely satisfied. Ben and the crew will exceed any expectations that you have for a project.”

— Google Review — Verified Client



“He does excellent work and fair prices. He uses good quality materials and presented us with options at various price points. We couldn't be more pleased and will hire him again.”

— Google Review — Repeat Client

Ready to Work With a Contractor Who Can Answer Every Question in This Guide?

Natural Builders has been remodeling homes in Summit County since 2016. We welcome every question on this checklist — and we'll answer them before you ask. If you're planning a kitchen, bathroom, or whole-home renovation, we'd like to hear from you.

(970) 409-3373

natural-builders.com

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Schedule a free initial consultation — no commitment, no pressure.

The contractors who get away with the disasters in this guide are counting on homeowners not knowing what questions to ask. Now you do.