



HOME REPAIR AND CONSTRUCTION: How to Choose a Contractor

Whether you are adding on to your existing home, building a new home or rebuilding your home after a disaster such as a flood or storm, choosing a contractor is a big decision that requires a little bit of homework. Be sure to carefully consider the following tips as you make your choice.

- Get recommendations of contractors to consider from friends and family, materials suppliers such as lumber yards or hardware stores, or the yellow pages of your local telephone directory.
- Verify the contractor's name and address and visit the contractor's business office, if possible.
- Find out if complaints have been filed against the contractor by contacting the Attorney General's office, Better Business Bureau and local Chamber of Commerce.
- Determine whether the contractor is a member of a professional association by checking with the appropriate building trade's offices.
- Request references and, if possible, physically inspect those jobs and talk to the customers to find out about the contractor's workmanship and work habits.
- Request an estimate of the cost of work to be done and compare it to estimates from at least two other contractors.
- Verify that the contractor has public liability and property damage insurance as required by the Home Repair and Remodeling Act.
- Determine whether the contractor will guarantee his or her work and products. Although it is not required, contractors may provide a one-year general warranty against defects in workmanship.
- Confirm that the contractor has complied with state or local licensing requirements:
 - **General contractors** are not required to be licensed or certified; however, they may need to obtain a permit from the municipality in which they are to provide contracting services.
 - **Roofers** are regulated by the Illinois Department of Financial and Professional Regulation (IDFPR) and must be licensed by the IDFPR to engage in business in Illinois. Roofers must display their license number on all their bids and contracts, on their vehicles and at their place of business. To determine whether a roofer is licensed, homeowners may check online at <http://www.idfpr.com> or call 1-888-4REGUL8 (1-888-473-4858).
 - **Plumbers** are regulated by the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) and must be licensed by the IDPH to engage in business in Illinois. They must display their license number at their place of business and on their vehicles and maintain a list of license numbers for all plumbers and apprentices they employ. To determine whether a plumber is licensed, homeowners may check with the IDPH within their municipality.

If you think you have been defrauded by a contractor or have any questions, please bring your concerns to the attention of the Illinois Attorney General's office.

Attorney General's Consumer Fraud Hotlines

Springfield
1-800-243-0618

Chicago
1-800-386-5438

Carbondale
1-800-243-0607