

Selecting A Contractor

Every year hundreds of families in the Greater Wichita Area are taken advantage of by disreputable individuals or companies who represent themselves to be reliable, reputable contractors. With that in mind a task force consisting of representatives of the Wichita Area Builders Association, the Plumbing Heating and Cooling Contractors Association, City and County officials, trade union representatives and representatives from the District Attorney's Office was formed to look for solutions for this growing problem. In addition to recommended changes in City and County Ordinances which provide for stricter penalties for dishonest contractors, the task force has developed a consumer education program. If you are planning to hire someone to repair or make improvements to your property, there are safeguards you can take to assure the best selection of a contractor for you.

Consider the Following:

Hire Only Licensed Contractors

Contractors are required to be licensed to do certain types of work. When selecting a contractor, you should make sure the contractor holds a current, valid license either issued by the City of Wichita, 268-4413 or Sedgwick County, 383-7951. Some of the smaller cities in the county also issue licenses. If you live in the jurisdiction of one of these cities and are planning to hire a contractor check with your local officials to determine if they require contractors to be licensed and whether or not the contractor you are considering hiring is either licensed by your city, or has been licensed by Wichita, or Sedgwick County.

All Contractors Do Not Possess the Same Expertise

Ask for references and check those references to assure yourself that the contractor is qualified to do the type of work you are wanting done.

Check Business References

Ask the contractor for a list of business references that you can call and verify that the relationships with suppliers and subcontractors are good ones and that the contractor pays his bills.



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Call the Better Business Bureau

263-3146, to find out if there are any complaints or charges pending against the contractor.

Call Local Trade Associations

such as the Wichita Area Builders Association, 265-4226, for information about selecting a contractor.

Ask for Proof from the Contractor That He/She Has General Liability Insurance

and workers compensation insurance in order to protect you, as the property owner, against any claim in the event the contractor, his employees, or someone else is injured as a result of work being done on your property.

Make Sure Your Contractor Will Be Personally Involved

in coordinating the work to be done on your property.

Make Sure All Required Permits Are Secured and Inspections Are Made

The contractor should be expected to secure all necessary permits. Beware of contractors who want you to secure the permit as the property owner. It is permissible to do so, but it is very unusual that a reputable contractor will ask you to do this.

Make Sure Complete Architectural Drawings Are Done and Agreed Upon

If you are having a room addition added or extensive remodeling done, be certain that detailed material specifications are also provided and made a part of the contract you sign.



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Make Sure You Have a Written Contract with the Contractor That Details

A full description of all work to be done

A firm date of completion

Total cost of the job

Contractor's license number

All warranty information

Quality of materials to be used

How and on what basis payments are to be made

How changes and payment for changes will be handled

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Monitor the Work Being Done

in accordance with the contractual agreement with the contractor. If you have questions about what is being done or problems with the contractor, either ask questions or confront the problem head on when it occurs in order to minimize any conflict and reach a satisfactory resolve as quickly as possible.

Final Payment Should Not Be Made Until You Are Satisfied

that the job has been completed in accordance with the terms of the contractual agreement between you and the contractor.



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