



At Home on Cape Cod

Herbie's Tips & Trends from the
Home Builders & Remodelers Association of Cape Cod

How to Hire an Honest Contractor

With the start of hurricane season and other severe summer weather upon us, home owners may find it necessary to call in professionals to help repair damage to their homes. It's an unfortunate fact of life that after a natural or man-made disaster, there are people who will try to profit from a community's misfortune.

But a fly-by-night contractor is one disaster you can prevent if you follow a few steps to ensure you hire a reputable professional. In fact, it makes sense to follow these guidelines when you are evaluating any potential contractor, whether it's for post-disaster repairs or a planned renovation to your home.

Here are some guidelines to keep in mind:

Price and payment

- Don't get pressured into signing a contract immediately. You should not be told that you need to sign a contract that day or risk a price increase.
- Paying a deposit of anywhere from 20 percent to 50 percent is common, however, you should not be asked to pay the full cost in advance, before work begins.
- Make sure you're comfortable with the payment options. You should not be asked to pay cash to a salesperson instead of a check, money order or credit card to a company.

References

- Confirm that the contractor has a verifiable mailing address for his business.
- Check the Better Business Bureau, www.bbb.org, to ensure the business doesn't have any unresolved complaints.
- Ask the contractor for references for past work and be sure the references can be reached.
- Check out the business on consumer review sites such as Angie's List, HomeAdvisor, Houzz, etc.
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- Remember, it's important to take the good with the bad when reading online reviews.

Contract and completion

- Be cautious of anyone that tells you that “a contract won't be necessary.” Insist on a complete and clearly written contract signed by you and the contractor.
- Ensure that the final payment is not due until the job is completely finished and you are fully satisfied with it. Find out if any of the work requires city or county inspection, and make sure that is done and you have paperwork to prove it before you make the final payment.

Following these guidelines will help you select a contractor who will do quality work, and stand behind it. To learn more about finding a reliable contractor with an established business in our community, visit capecodbuilders.org.



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