

TIPS FOR HIRING A HOME IMPROVEMENT CONTRACTOR

1. Decide what the project is and how much you can afford to spend. Some contractors may try to talk you into a bigger project than you need or can afford.
2. Interview a number of contractors before you make a final selection. Reputable contractors don't mind if you shop around to get competitive bids. Make sure that all prospective contractors are bidding on the same type and quality services. Compare apples and oranges.
3. Ask for references from the contractor for similar jobs he has done in the area. Don't be afraid to call the references. Ask them about quality of work, whether the contractor was prompt and worked diligently to complete the job, and whether they had to call the contractor back after the job was done.
4. Connecticut's home improvement law requires a written contract between contractor and owner. The contract should include:
 - a) A description of the work to be done
 - b) Must include start and finish dates
 - c) Must include a written notice of your right to cancel the contract within 3 business days.
 - d) Both you and the contractor must sign the contract
 - e) Include frequency of payments if partial payments are agreed upon as part of contract.
5. Be careful when a contractor requests a large down payment or substantial payments prior to completion. Avoid contractors that offer special sales or discounts if they can start right away or if you sign a contract immediately.
6. Have the contractor provide you with a certificate of insurance. If the contractor has employees they must also have workers compensation insurance to protect you if an employee gets hurt on your property.
7. Permits – it is the homeowner's ultimate responsibility to make sure that proper building permits are taken out where required. The contractor performing the work should take out the permit and provide you a copy for your records. If you have any doubts as to whether a permit is required for a given project, don't hesitate to call the Granby Building Department at 844-5318.
8. If there are changes to the written contract, they should be made in writing and signed by both homeowner and contractor. This can prevent future conflicts over additional changes. Generally even small changes to the scope of work will result in additional costs.
9. Guarantees or warranties should always be in writing. Have the contractor explain warranty information or operating instructions where applicable. Question anything you don't understand.
10. If you are not sure if a contractor is properly licensed or registered with the state, call the Department of Consumer Protection and 713-6110. To investigate complaints against registered contractors call 713-6110 or visit the Department of Consumer Protection website: www.ct.gov/dcp

BE AN INFORMED CONSUMER! DON'T BE AFRAID TO ASK QUESTIONS. IF YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND SOMETHING ABOUT A HOME IMPROVEMENT PROJECT HAVE A FRIEND OR FAMILY MEMBER REVIEW IT WITH YOU. DON'T RUSH INTO ANYTHING OR BE PRESSURED INTO SIGNING ANYTHING UNLESS YOU ARE SURE YOU UNDERSTAND IT.