

Checklist for Hiring a Contractor

Many homeowners view hiring a tradesman for home repairs or improvements to be a painful process. Verifying the few simple items listed here will help you to eliminate dubious contractors and raise your confidence level in the professional you select. Legitimate professionals are happy to share their qualifications with you. Think carefully before using a tradesman who seems reluctant to respond to any of the items listed here.

REFERENCES

Ask for a large list of previous customers and about work done in your neighborhood on similar homes. This assures that you are not forced to call two or three hand-picked “good” references.

ESTABLISHED FIRM

Has the firm been in business for a substantial period of time? Is the firm a member of a professional organization i.e., a Plumbing Contractors Association, Local Chamber of Commerce, etc.?

VALID LICENSE

Does your plumbing contractor have a valid license? Call, State of Illinois at (217) 524-0799, City of Chicago (312) 744-3895 or (312) 744-8830

Licensing Facts: Illinois Plumbing License Law

The Illinois General Assembly regulates plumbing and the plumbing trade for the protection of public health, convenience and welfare. Anyone who plans, inspects, installs, alters, repairs, and maintains plumbing systems must meet certain licensing requirements. All licensed plumbers must follow the Illinois Plumbing Code as a minimum standard for all work performed in the State of Illinois.

Continuing education is required each year by the State of Illinois for plumbers to renew their plumbing license. To determine if your plumbing contractor has a valid license, contact: State of Illinois at (217) 524-0799, City of Chicago at (312) 744-3895

INSURANCE

Does the contractor have insurance? Ask him or her for a certificate of insurance. If he or she is hesitant to comply with your request, think twice.

PAYMENTS

Be wary of contractors who ask for substantial down payments or request a check made out to a party other than the firm name on the contract and/or invoice.

CONTRACT

Never sign a blank contract. Make sure everything is in writing and keep a copy of everything you sign. Be sure you know exactly how much the job will cost before it starts.

WAIVER OF LIEN

Insist on a “Final: Waiver of Lien” from each subcontractor supplying materials and labor for the job. If the general contractor doesn't pay his subcontractors, they may be able to enforce a mechanic's lien against your property and prevent you from selling it.

