



LOWER PROVIDENCE TOWNSHIP

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CODE ENFORCEMENT HIRING A REPUTABLE CONTRACTOR

Effective July 1, 2009, the PA Home Improvement Consumer Protection Act was enacted to provide protection for consumers using the services of a contractor for home improvements. The law establishes a mandatory registration program for contractors who offer or perform home improvements for private residences.

Here are some tips on how to choose a builder or remodeler:

- Ask if the contractor is a registered home improvement contractor.
- Take your time. Most problems occur when consumers fail to investigate contractors carefully before hiring them.
- Ask for an insurance certificate to verify current workers' compensation and general liability insurance.
- Ask for references. Talk with others who have had work done by the contractor about the company's capabilities and quality of workmanship.
- Beware of an unusually low bid or low advertised price. If a contractor cannot pay for labor, materials and overhead, you are both in trouble.
- Make sure the contractor has a permanent business location and a good reputation with local banks and suppliers.
- Incorporate any warranties, guarantees or other promises in your written contract. Always insist on a written contract and written change orders.
- Be specific about starting and completion dates. Some delays are unavoidable and beyond the contractor's control.
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Beware of these warning signs of possible trouble ahead when selecting a contractor:

- You cannot verify the name, address and telephone number or credentials of the contractor.
- The salesperson tries to "high pressure" you into signing a contract by using scare tactics, threats or intimidation.
- Although reputable builders sometimes offer special discounts for advertising purposes, watch out for contractors who offer unusually low prices in exchange for advertising. Protect yourself by asking the contractor for a list of previous clients who also had been offered the special rate in exchange for advertising considerations.
- Call the references and ask them if they received the promised quality workmanship and special rate.
- The contractor does not comply with your request for references or the references have some reservation about the contractor.
- You are unable to verify that the contractor is insured.