

CONSUMER TIPS



Contractors are essential to helping build and repair your home or property.

Below are some tips that can help ensure you're working with a licensed, legitimate contractor and to avoid falling victim to a contractor scam.

CHOOSING A CONTRACTOR

✓ **VERIFY CONTRACTOR LICENSE FIRST**

Verify that the contractor has an active, valid Florida license at www.MyFloridaLicense.com.

Don't allow a contractor to inspect your property, including your roof, until you have verified that they are a licensed, reputable contractor.

✓ **VERIFY WORKERS' COMPENSATION INSURANCE**

Verify that the contractor has either:

- ▶ **Workers' Compensation Insurance**
<https://dwcdataportal.fldfs.com/ProofOfCoverage.aspx>
- ▶ **Proof of a Workers' Compensation Exemption**
<https://dwcdataportal.fldfs.com/Exemption.aspx>

✓ **CHECK FOR COMPLAINTS**

Check for complaints filed on the contractor on the Better Business Bureau's website: www.BBB.org.

✓ **CONTRACTOR REFERENCES**

Ask the contractor for references, preferably references that are less than 12 months old.

✓ **DETAILED ESTIMATES**

ALWAYS get a detailed written estimate prior to signing a contract or repair agreement.

✓ **MULTIPLE ESTIMATES**

Obtain detailed, written estimates from at least 3 licensed, reputable contractors. Ask friends, co-workers or family members for referrals.

✓ **UNDERSTANDING YOUR INSURANCE POLICY**

Do not let a contractor explain or interpret your insurance policy. If you have questions about your insurance policy or coverage, contact your insurance agent or insurance company for answers.

✓ **INSURANCE COMPANY INSPECTIONS**

If the work being done by a contractor is part of an insurance claim, allow your insurance company to come out and inspect the damages **BEFORE** you sign any paperwork and **BEFORE** a contractor starts work.

DEMOLISH CONTRACTOR FRAUD
STEPS TO AVOID FALLING VICTIM

CONTRACTS & DOCUMENTATION

✓ **INSURANCE DOCUMENTATION**

Always get a copy of the contractor's proof of General Liability and Workers' Compensation insurance or Proof of Workers' Compensation Exemption BEFORE signing a contract or repair agreement.

✓ **UNDERSTAND EVERYTHING YOU SIGN**

When signing a document, do not sign it if you do not understand it! If you need to, request assistance from a trusted professional, family member or friend with interpreting contract terms and understanding what you are about to sign.

✓ **NEVER SIGN DOCUMENTS WITH BLANK SPACES**

Do not ever leave any blank areas on a signed contract or sign a contract with incomplete sections; this can allow for terms or conditions to be added at a later date that you did not agree to.

✓ **DOCUMENTATION OF ALL CONSTRUCTION DETAILS**

Ensure everything is in writing, including a full description of the work the contractor will be performing, the start date, the estimated completion date, an itemized budget and a payment schedule.

✓ **REQUEST COPIES OF ALL DOCUMENTS**

Always get a copy of every document you sign BEFORE the contractor starts work.

✓ **SUBMIT CONTRACTS FOR PROFESSIONAL REVIEW**

You may submit contracts to the Department of Financial Services' **Check My Contract** service for independent review to ensure the contract complies with Florida Law. <https://MyFloridaCFO.com/Division/Consumers/check-my-contract>

✓ **BUILDING PERMITS**

Ensure the contractor obtains the correct building permits for the work being done by checking with your county or city permitting office.

PAYMENTS

✓ **ADVANCE PAYMENTS**

Do not pay in cash or pay the full payment up front. Sometimes advance payment to the contractor is necessary to pay for materials, but this advanced payment should never be 50% or more of the full price for the service.

✓ **CONTRACTOR'S FINAL PAYMENT AFFIDAVIT**

Before making the final payment to a contractor, ask the contractor for the Contractor's Final Payment Affidavit to verify that the contractor has paid all of the subcontractors and suppliers. Section 713.06(3)(d), Florida Statutes requires contractors to provide a Contractor's Final Payment Affidavit when the final payment for the contract becomes due. If debt remains unpaid, subcontractors/suppliers are able to place a lien on your home, as provided in Sections 713.05 and 713.06, Florida Statutes.

✓ **FINAL PAYMENT**

Do not make the final payment to the contractor until ALL work has been completed to your satisfaction.