



Hiring A Home Improvement Contractor? Quick Tips for Homeowners

Before You Hire...

- Check if your home improvement contractor is licensed by calling 311 or using DCA's Instant License Check at www.nyc.gov/consumers.** Persons soliciting or performing home improvement work in New York City costing more than \$200 *must* be licensed by DCA:
 - The person who negotiates the contract is the “salesperson.” Make sure the salesperson is licensed.
 - The person who performs work on your home is the “contractor.” Make sure the home improvement contractor is licensed.
 - If the person performs both duties, check for both required licenses.
- Get written estimates from at least three separate home improvement businesses.**
- Get reliable references.**
 - Call 311 for complaint histories with DCA. Also check with consumer protection agencies in Nassau, Suffolk, Westchester, and other neighboring counties for complaint histories.
 - Call past customers of your potential contractor. Some questions to ask:
 - Did the contractor complete the job on time?
 - Were there any additional costs during the project?
 - Do you have photographs from before and after renovations for review?

Contract Time...

- Make sure every detail of the project is written in the contract**, including specific work to be done, type of materials to be used and itemized costs, warranties, cleanup responsibilities, and payment schedules based on work progress. To review a sample contract, visit www.nyc.gov/consumers. **Reminder:** You have the right to cancel the contract within three days of signing it.
- Do not pay more than 25% of the total amount upfront (up to a maximum \$15,000) and never pay cash.**
- It is illegal for contractors or salespeople to arrange or offer to arrange home improvement loans for you.** If they attempt to do this, file a complaint immediately with DCA via 311 or online at www.nyc.gov/consumers.

After You Hire...

- Monitor the progress of all work and make sure that any extra work and/or change in supplies are indicated in writing along with the additional costs.
- When submitting payments, **never pay in cash and keep track of all payments.**
- Do not submit final payment until all work is carefully inspected and meets your approval.

BONUS: Visit www.nyc.gov/greenyc for “green” tips for your home.