



Oregon Construction Contractors Board
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

DATE: March 16, 2007 (07-04)
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**Oregon Construction Contractors Board launches
consumer-friendly website**

Just when homeowners begin to think about spring home improvement projects, the Oregon Construction Contractors Board (CCB) has rolled out its new consumer-friendly website at www.hirelicensedcontractor.com.

“The agency’s primary website includes a lot of information important to construction contractors,” says Gina Fox, spokesperson for the CCB. “The new consumer-friendly website is all about what a consumer might need to help make a project run smoothly.”

“We’re excited to be able to launch the website now,” say Fox. “Just like clockwork, spring tends to bring out the unscrupulous individuals looking for an easy scam.”

Helpful information on the website includes these time-tested tips the CCB recommends to all homeowners contracting to have work done:

1. **Make sure the contractor is licensed with the CCB.** Before hiring a contractor, check the contractor’s license and complaint history at www.hirelicensedcontractor.com or 503-378-4621. Take the time to make an informed decision. You wouldn’t trust an unlicensed driver with your car. Don’t give the keys to your most precious investment to an unlicensed contractor.

Licensing is required for those that offer painting, roofing, carpentry, siding, plumbing, electrical, floor covering, concrete, asphalt, window, insulation, manufactured dwelling

installation, inspection services, heating and air conditioning, and most other construction and repair services.

2. **Use a written contract.** Put all agreements, and all changes, in writing. Generally, the more detailed a contract, the fewer problems that occur later. A big project needs more than a vague contract: “Remodel master bedroom, \$19,500 is simply not sufficient.” Know what your contract does, and does not cover. Don’t sign unless you understand everything.
3. **Get more than one bid, but don’t automatically accept the lowest bid.** The old saying, “you get what you pay for” applies to construction projects. A higher bid may be worth the price in better materials, workmanship and reliability.

A large number of CCB complaints are a result of homeowners accepting an unrealistically low bid and then being unhappy with the low quality of work.

4. **Communicate.** Asking lots of questions before the job starts helps prevent problems later. Talk to your contractor throughout the project. Most disputes happen because people fail to communicate at every step.
5. **Check references.** Learn as much as you can about the contractor you are hiring.
6. **Get building permits.** Most home improvement, repair or remodeling jobs require permits from your local building department. Usually contractors get them because they know what permits are required. But ultimately, the owner is responsible for making sure the required permits are obtained. Failing to get building permits doesn’t save you money—it can cost you your safety and sense of security.

According to the CCB, most construction projects go smoothly when consumers do their homework by checking out their contractor, set realistic expectations, and make wise, informed decisions during the project.

The CCB is a state agency licensing more than 44,000 contractors. Anyone who is paid to repair, improve or build a home must be licensed by the CCB. Consumers can verify a contractor’s license and find information for successful projects at www.hirelicensedcontractor.com or by visiting www.oregon.gov/CCB. Consumers can also get information by calling 503-378-4621.

(SIDEBAR)

Older adults are often targets of fraud because they appear to be the most vulnerable. But they are not the only ones that can be convinced by a smooth con. The following tips from the Construction Contractors Board (CCB) can help you recognize a scam.

- Be wary of those that come door-to-door to repair your roof, driveway, chimney, etc.
- Be cautious of those who are peddling left over materials, or use high pressure tactics to get you to accept their offer without a chance to think it over, or to check them out.
- Be suspicious of those who have sad tales, even if you really want to “help them out”.
- Be careful of drifters—unlicensed contractors that drift in from out of state, scam unsuspecting homeowners and run.

Most contractors run legitimate businesses. And some legitimate businesses use door-to-door sales or have vehicles with out-of state plates. Be cautious and take that extra step to check with the CCB to verify the contractor is actively licensed to work in Oregon.