



TOOLS & TIPS

CCB'S HOMEOWNER NEWSLETTER

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**Oregon Construction
Contractors Board**

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It's Fall Y'all! 7 Home Maintenance Tasks to Prepare for Cold Weather

Time to perform that annual home inspection! If your home needs repair, it's important to identify potential maintenance issues that could lead to damage, and hire a contractor before rain and snow fall.

1. Look for cracked or peeling caulking or weather-stripping around window sills, door frames, siding gaps, trim, then repair or replace if missing or damaged.
2. Check roof for damaged, loose or missing shingles. Check flashing around roof stacks, vents, skylights, and chimneys and in roof valleys for missing or loose flashing. Repair or replace if necessary.
3. Check for water stains in the roof of the attic and in the exterior overhangs or soffits. If water stains are present, locate and repair the cause of moisture intrusion.
4. Check and repair missing mortar in exterior masonry.
5. Inspect gutters and downspouts for leaks. Repair if necessary. Check alignment of gutters, downspouts and splash blocks to ensure that water is properly diverted away from the structure and foundation. Repair if necessary.
6. Inspect gutters for debris blockage. Remove debris (for example, tree needles and leaves) from downspouts and gutters.
7. Check soil around foundation to make sure that it slopes in such a way that water can flow away from the foundation. Fill soil in any areas that have settled around the foundation.



I'm going to hire someone to do some work to prepare my house for winter. Should they have a CCB license if...

...they're cleaning my gutters?

No, you do not need a CCB license to clean gutters. However, they will need a CCB license to make gutter repairs or perform new gutter installation.

...they're weatherizing my house?

Most likely. Some simple weatherizing tasks are so minor that they may not require a CCB license. However, it depends a lot on the scope of the project, cost, and other factors. Minor projects can easily grow in scope, so it's better to hire a licensed professional that can perform any work that comes up during your project.

They will need a license to perform any of the following:

- Pump insulation into the walls
- Repair a broken fireplace damper that won't close
- Replace external doors

...if they're cleaning my chimney?

Yes, you need a CCB license to construct, clean, inspect, repair or sweep a chimney in Oregon.

Remember, hiring a licensed contractor protects you. When you work with a licensed contractor, you have access to the CCB's mediation services. You can also check their license history on our website, which can help you make an informed decision when hiring a professional.

If you have questions about whether a home improvement project requires a licensed contractor, give us a call. 503-378-4621.



5 Questions to ask before you hire a contractor

Before you hire a contractor to perform a home improvement project, it's important to compare multiple contractors. Speaking with contractors in-person and asking them questions can help you pick the right contractor for your job. You'll probably think of many questions to ask your contractor when they show up at your house. Below are a few questions we recommend homeowners ask contractors before they sign a contract.

1. What's your CCB license number?

Contractors put their CCB number on advertisements, business cards and contracts. However, if you don't see your contractor's CCB number in any of these places, ask for their number.

Hiring a contractor with an active CCB number protects you. Here's how:

Licensed contractors have a track record you can check, and if something goes wrong with your licensed contractor, the CCB has a dispute resolution process to help homeowners and contractors sort out their differences. If you choose to hire an unlicensed contractor, the only recourse if something goes wrong with your home improvement project will be to go to court.

Once you have your contractor's CCB number, check their license number on our website to see if it's active.

1. Visit the CCB's website at <http://search.ccb.state.or.us/search/>
2. Type in the CCB number. You'll see the contractor's license number, the name of the business, and the license status. Never hire a contractor with a license status that isn't active. If you don't have the CCB license number you can also search for license contractors using the business or owner's name.
3. Select the choose button next to the contractor's CCB number. The website will take you to the CCB license summary for that contractor. There, you'll see if the contractor has any unpaid claims, unpaid civil penalties and history of complaints or disciplinary sanctions.
4. Click on learn more about this business, found in the "About this Business" section of the license summary. The business detail shows the type of endorsements or specialty licenses the contractor holds. On this page, you'll be able to see if your contractor has workers compensation coverage. You can also check to see if they have a lead-based paint renovation license, which is required to perform work on houses built before 1978.

2. What's your experience with this kind of work?

It's important to hire a contractor that has relevant experience relating to the type of work that your job requires. This knowledge and experience will help your contractor determine costs and timeline, and will help your contractor manage your project without trouble.

While a less experienced contractor may also be capable of doing the work, you might be taking a risk if you hire someone who has never performed this type of work previously.

How can you tell if the contractor has relevant experience? Experienced contractors should be able to talk knowledgeably about the work they did and may have pictures of previous work to show. They may also have more insightful questions about your project.

3. When can you start work?

Contractors tend to be very busy. You might need the work done soon, but your contractor may not be available for several months. If your home is having an urgent problem, like a roof leak, find out if your contractor can do something in the meantime that can prevent further damage. If you're on a strict timeline, start interviewing contractors as quickly as possible. You may need to interview more contractors until you find a contractor that has availability. Other questions to ask include:

- How long do you anticipate work will take?
- Do you anticipate any conflicts or trouble that could slow down my project? For example, scheduling subcontractors for completion of your project or supply shortages.
- How will you document any necessary change orders?
- Is there anything I can do to keep the process moving or expedite my project?
- What will happen if you're not finished by the anticipated completion date?

4. Do you have references?

Always check a contractor's references before hiring, especially for bigger jobs. Even new contractors should have references from previous employers, businesses or suppliers they've worked with in the past. If possible, contact three references. Ask them questions such as:

- When did this contractor perform work for you?
- What kind of work did the contractor perform?
- Would you hire this contractor again?
- Were you happy with the work the contractor performed?
- Would you recommend this contractor to others?
- How did the contractor handle problems on the job?
- Was the work finished on time? If not, why not?

CCB License Summary:	
ABC CONSTRUCTION	
About this Business	
License #:	999998
Status:	Not Active - Expired after a lapse
First Licensed:	1/15/2015
Learn more about this business	
Unpaid Debt (Covers past 10 years)	
Unpaid Claims:	\$0.00
Unpaid Civil Penalties:	\$0.00
Complaint History (Covers past 10 years)	
Any complaints (claims) filed against this contractor?	No
Disciplinary History (Covers past 10 years)	
Any civil penalties or other sanctions (license suspensions)?	No
Administrative Suspensions (Covers past 10 years)	
Has the CCB ever suspended this contractor for lack of bond/insurance?	No
Find License Information from Other Agencies	
Plumbing and Electrical Licenses	Building Codes Division
Landscape Business Licenses	Landscape Contractor Board
Workers' Compensation Insurance	Department of Consumer and Business Services

5. When can I expect a quote?

The first step to working with a contractor is to get a quote. Know when your contractor expects to do this, and when you can follow up if you haven't heard back from your contractor.

Some contractors use their quote as their contract, others may provide a quote and then write up a contract if the quote sounds realistic. Read any documentation your contractor provides thoroughly before signing.

Contracts are required for jobs over \$2,000, however we recommend getting a contract even if the job is for much less. Contracts help establish expectations and give you something to refer back to if you and your contractor have a miscommunication. Ultimately, a good contract will protect both parties and help ensure a successful project.



Want More Info? CCB Will Send You Our Guide to Selecting a Contractor (free)

CCB provides publications to homeowners who would like to know more about performing home improvement projects and how to hire a licensed contractor. Our **Guide to Selecting a Contractor** provides in-depth information for homeowners beginning a large-scale home improvement project. You'll learn when to get a contract, how to find a contractor, what to expect step by step through your project and more. To order yours, [fill out our online form](#).

Do you represent a community group, like a town council, a local non-profit or a retirement community? We can send you publications to distribute or make available in your lobby or resource room. Contact us to learn more!

We can also provide webinars for your community group if you would like to see a presentation on this topic. Call 503-934-2195, or email leslie.culpepper@ccb.oregon.gov

Know Someone Making Home Improvement Projects? Tell Them About Our Newsletter!

Spread the word about CCB's newsletter! If you know someone who could use advice about hiring a contractor, the link to our sign up is located at:

<https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/ORCCB/subscriber/new>

If you have received this newsletter through our web delivery service, you can also find a PDF version of this publication on our website at <https://www.oregon.gov/ccb/news/Pages/Homeowner-Newsletters.aspx>

