



Oregon Construction Contractors Board
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**Sunshine and Warmer Weather: A Perfect Time for Home
Improvements**

As the days start to stretch out longer and the sun shows up more and more, homeowners often begin thinking about making improvements to their home.

Maybe it's a deck, a fence, reroofing or painting the house.

Even in a tough economy, many homeowners still want to make improvements to their best investment: their home. But a tough economy can mean more scams or better bargains.

On one hand when money is tight, lots of people tend to look for bargains. On the other hand prices for home improvements may be the best we've seen as contractors look for those spring customers. This can be a good thing, but the CCB realizes that it could also be a perfect storm for the unscrupulous "so-called" contractor.

"This is a good time to remind homeowners about the importance of taking a few minutes to check the contractor's license with the Construction Contractors Board (CCB)," says CCB Administrator Craig Smith. "The contractor's information is available on the CCB website or by calling the agency."

An active license ensures that the contractor is bonded. Contractors are also required to maintain liability insurance. The programs of the CCB serve to hold contractors accountable for their business practices.

The agency warns homeowners to be careful about using online services like Craig's list where many consumers report finding unlicensed contractors offering to perform low cost home improvements. Door-to-door solicitation is another red-flag area.

These "deals" may look good, but can lead to poor quality work, or worse. The CCB stresses to homeowners that the lowest price may not always be the best option. You may be getting lower quality materials, less skill and experience, "corners cut", or a scammer. And if an offer seems too good to be true (like left-over materials at a really low price), it usually is.

"It is important to do some homework," says Smith. "Compare pricing. Understand what you are getting and who you are getting for your hard-earned money. Don't be pressured into a quick deal. And check the contractor's license. After all, your home may be the biggest investment you have."

Though most projects are successful and homeowners are happy with the work, when problems occur with an unlicensed contractor, it usually means a homeowner is left with an incomplete job or a job poorly done. The few minutes it takes to look up a contractor beforehand can save a lot of grief later.

The CCB is a state agency licensing more than 44,000 contractors. Anyone who is paid to arrange, 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 by clicking on the Consumer Help Page at www.oregon.gov/CCB or by calling 503-378-4621.

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