



TIPS ON CONTRACTOR SELECTION

When selecting a contractor to perform work, the following list of items may be considered to assist you in the process. A little work up front can go a long way to prevent hiring an undesirable contractor and getting unpleasant results.

- Make sure you get a written and signed scope of work with the price included. Do not rely on anyone's word, or a handshake. It is critical that you know what work the contractor is doing and how much you are paying for that work.
- Consider speaking with more than just one contractor and looking at the overall value they provide.
- Never pay for a project in advance. Be wary of any contractor requesting total payment up front prior to any work being started. A small retainer fee or payment for materials may be appropriate.
- Never use a contractor who advises that permits or inspections are not required. Be aware of contractors who intend to perform work that does not comply with established standards.
- Be especially wary of contractors suggesting that the property owner obtain the necessary permits for their work. The property owner then becomes responsible for the work. Contractors will do this to relieve themselves of responsibility.
- Verify that the contractor is licensed by asking them to produce credentials. The State of Texas requires that Electricians, Plumbers, Heating and Air Conditioning contractors, and Irrigation contractors must be licensed. They must carry a license on their person and their vehicles must be identified with their state license number affixed to the vehicle.
- General contractors must be registered with the City before doing any work. Contact Building Inspections to ascertain such information.
- Ask the contractor for a list of work previously performed that is like your project. Ask for references and check them.
- Verify the contractor's place of business by driving there and observing the site for anything unusual that may be cause for concern.
- Check with the Better Business Bureau for any complaint records on your contractor.
- Before the project begins, insist on seeing the permit(s) issued by the City, and check the City's online permitting webpage to review for permits and/or inspections. During construction, monitor your contractor's inspection records. This will protect you from being responsible for code violations and ensure project completion.

This is not an all-encompassing list. Ask lots of questions and if the answers sound suspicious, investigate further.

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