

CODE'S CORNER

TIPS ON HOW TO SELECT A CONTRACTOR

Develop a list of potential contractors. Ask friends, neighbors, relatives, and co-workers who they have used. Find out if their experiences were good or bad and why? Ask if they would use the contractor again.

Ask contractors for references. Call your potential contractors and ask for a list of their customers and the locations of completed jobs. Call references and ask whether they were satisfied with the job done, if the contractor kept to the agreed-upon schedule, and whether they would hire the same contractor again.

Ask to which trade associations the contractor belongs. Home-building and remodeling is professional work. Membership in a professional association is one sign the contractor recognizes the responsibilities of being a professional.

Make sure to obtain and evaluate bids. Ask for a free written estimate of the work you want done. Be sure everyone is bidding on the same exact scope of work and including the exact materials you want. If one contractor is bidding on furnishing top-of-the-line materials, and another is bidding bottom-of-the-line materials, this could account for a big difference in price. Be sure all quotes include everything you want.

Remember “**you get what you pay for**” applies to home construction and improvement also. A higher price may be worth the price for better workmanship and contractor reliability. If a contractor has bid too low to make a profit, he may use cheaper materials, take shortcuts, or walk off the job to take another project.

Make sure you understand the different types of bids you may receive. Be careful about hiring a contractor on an hourly- time- and -material, or cost plus basis. Although the price may seem high at first, a fixed-price bid may give you the best protection and price. Also beware of “special deals” “demonstration projects”, or “a great deal from a friend”. **Always have the contractor obtain a permit from the local building authority, never hire anyone without a contractor's license or that is properly insured. Under no circumstance obtain a permit as a homeowner for a contractor.**

These Tips are brought to you from:
Farragut Building Inspection
Department
675-2384