



## **Tips for Hiring a Contractor**

### **Obtain Recommendations from Reputable Sources**

Get recommendations from people who have used contractors that performed outstanding work. Visually inspect the work a contractor has done in another home.

### **Verify That the Contractor is Legitimate and Properly Insured**

Check to be sure the contractor is licensed, bonded and properly insured. Ask for certificates of insurance for workers compensation and general liability policies.

### **Contact the Better Business Bureau (BBB)**

Call the local BBB or visit [www.bbb.org](http://www.bbb.org) to determine if complaints have been filed.

### **Avoid Contractors Who Solicit Your Business**

A contractor who solicits business via door-to-door or cold calls may be questionable. Also, most contractors won't quote a price as a limited time offer. Refrain from hiring a contractor whose price will change if you don't sign a contract immediately.

### **Get a Free, Written Estimate**

Ask the contractor for an estimate in writing that includes any oral agreements that have been made. The estimate should include a line-by-line breakdown of costs, including materials and labor. Most contractors do not charge to provide a written estimate.

### **Obtain Three Estimates**

Get at least three written estimates, as well as names and phone numbers of two former customers of the contractor. Contact these customers, and ask about the work performed.

### **Do Not Choose a Contractor Based on Price Alone**

Avoid automatically choosing the lowest estimate. This contractor's work may be lacking in quality, or he/she may use inferior materials.

### **Get a Copy of the Contract**

The contract should include a "hold harmless" clause in your favor. This clause specifies that the contractor will indemnify you for your liability to people who are injured or whose property is damaged during the course of the contractor's work. The contract should explicitly state the work to be performed, start and end dates, payment agreements and warranty information.

### **Avoid Up-Front Payments**

Be wary of a contractor who demands payment for the entire job before work begins. Standard practice is to pay only 33% of the job up front.

### **Consider Hiring an Attorney**

If major work is to be done on your home, or the contract involves a considerable sum of money, ask an attorney to review the contract before you sign.

This information is advisory in nature. No liability is assumed by reason of the information in this document. Chubb refers to the insurers of the Chubb Group of Insurance Companies underwriting coverage. For a list of these insurers, please visit [chubb.com](http://chubb.com). Chubb Personal Insurance (CPI) is the personal lines property & casualty strategic business unit of Chubb & Son, a division of Federal Insurance Company, as manager and/or agent for the insurers of the Chubb Group of Insurance companies. Chubb Personal Insurance, PO Box 1600, Whitehouse Station, NJ 08889-1600.