



## Information on hiring a Contractor

Homeowners should be aware that there is no statewide testing, licensing or registration for home improvement contractors, only trade contractors such as Electrical, Plumbing or Mechanical. However, the City of Brecksville does require all contractors to be registered with the City prior to doing any work. Permits are required for most projects. Before you start a project, begin the process by making a plan and consider your household needs and wishes.

- Plan your project. If you know what you want done and can clearly explain it, you are less likely to misunderstand instructions or encounter cost overruns.
- What is your time frame? Does it need to be done by a certain date or can it be worked on in stages?
- Before work begins, ask your contractor what inconveniences may occur and plan for them. Be sure your contractor is aware of vacations or special events so that he or she may plan accordingly.
- Will you have to adjust your current lifestyle? For instance, is it a major kitchen or bathroom remodel that you need to plan to be without?

By following some simple guidelines, you can make selecting a contractor easier and be better prepared to make an informed decision that best suits your needs, and most importantly, protect yourself from scams. Choosing your contractor is the most important decision you'll make in a remodeling project. Your selection will ultimately determine the success of the job and your enjoyment of the remodeling process. Although the Building Department can not recommend any contractor, a list of contractors registered with the City of Brecksville is available. Registered contractors provide the City with insurance information, state license (specific trades only) and a contractor's bond in case a code issue does arise.

Here is a list of questions to help you establish a contractor's qualifications and reputation, and to help you find the right person for your project.

- How long have you been in business?
- Who will be assigned as the project supervisor for the job?
- What is the time frame for starting the project?
- Do you have employees or do you use subcontractors?
- Do you have design services available?
- Does your company carry worker's compensation and liability insurance?
- Are you registered with the City of Brecksville?
- How many projects like mine have you completed in the past year?
- May I have a list of references for projects you've completed which are similar to mine?
- Will we need a permit for this project?



By taking the time to choose the right person for the job, you're most likely getting a contractor that is professional and committed to the success of your project.

Remember:

- There are no "dumb" questions.
- Contact the Better Business Bureau (216-241-7678) regarding your contractor. Any complaints?
- Make sure the plans are detailed.
- Make sure the contract is detailed including start and finish dates.
- Verify with the Brecksville Building Department (440-526-2630) if a permit is required. Ask for a copy of the permit from your contractor prior to the start of the job.
- Put in writing any changes to your original agreement. Avoid verbal contracts or amendments.

Beware if a contractor:

- ❖ Offers a special price only if you sign today, or use other high-pressure sales techniques.
- ❖ Only accepts cash, requires large deposits or the entire cost up front, or asks you to make the payment in their name.
- ❖ Asks **you** to get the building permit. Contractors are required to obtain the permit. Permits are your protection and help ensure that work will meet local building codes.