

Hiring a Contractor

Adding a room, renovating a basement, or doing some much-needed repairs? Finding a good contractor is important – a home improvement project gone wrong can cost you. A good ad isn't proof a contractor does quality work. Find out for yourself. Check with friends, neighbors, or co-workers who've had improvement work done, and check out a contractor's reputation and whether they are licensed through the Virginia Department of Professional and Occupational Regulation (DPOR). Get written estimates from several contractors, keeping in mind the lowest bidder may not always be best choice.



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Do You Consider Your Home an Investment?

Well, you should.

With that in mind, it is in your best interest to always plan ahead for construction projects and follow the guidelines. This may save you from a “headache” and lots of stress that can be associated with a home improvement project.

Also, if you don’t follow the proper procedures when “hiring a contractor” you may be left to finish the project on your own, without any money, because you have already paid the contractor for the project...

THAT IS NOT COMPLETE

Just remember...

- Plan ahead
- Call Inspections to verify contractor’s license information
- Make sure contractor obtains a permit, if required



Top 10 Tips for making sure your contractor measures up.

1. Hire **ONLY licensed** contractors.
2. **Verify license** status online at <http://www.dpor.virginia.gov/LicenseLookup/> or call (804) 367-8511. We can also help in the Inspections Office by calling (434) 799-5260.
3. Check references and review past work.
4. Get a least three written estimates.
5. Insist on a detailed written contract—and do not sign anything until you completely understand the terms.
6. Limit your deposit to **10% down or \$1,000, whichever is less.** (Up to 30% of total contract value in case of special orders/custom-made items)
7. Don’t let your payments get ahead of the work.
8. Don’t pay 100% of the bill until the job is 100% complete.
9. **NEVER** pay **cash.**
10. Keep a job file of all payments and papers relating to your project (permits, change orders, warranties, etc.).

Most licensed contractors will know whether a permit is required and usually will take care of contacting our office. However, there may be an instance when the contractor will ask you, the homeowner, to obtain the permit. This can be an indication that the contractor is not “properly” licensed and/or bonded. If you feel uncomfortable with the contractor’s requirements, call us and we can help you determine if the contractor is on the “up and up”. Working with licensed contractors has many advantages, such as:

1. They should be familiar with the current code changes;
2. They should be familiar with the permitting/inspections process;

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