



City of Anna Maria

What is the best way to select a Contractor?

Before signing a contract or agreeing to employ a contractor, you should follow these suggestions:

1. Obtain several bids (estimates) on the proposed job, even if it is relatively small. Provide the contractor with a written list of any special concerns you may have, such as dust control, privacy and work hour access. Discuss these concerns with the contractor before you receive the bids.
2. Get the name of the contractor's company and the contractor's licensing number.
3. Call your local City Building Department (941-708-6132 ext.25) or County Building Department (941-748-4501) and the Florida Department of Professional Regulation (1-800-342-7940). Ask these officials whether the contractor has an active license to work in your area; whether there are any outstanding complaints against the contractor.
4. Check with the Home Builders Association of Manatee County (941-749-7035), local building material suppliers and banks to see whether there are any outstanding complaints against the contractor. Most contractors who have been established for at least five years have a reputable standing; however, that's only a rule of thumb, not a guarantee.
5. Ask the contractor to supply the names of at least three local references (clients) and the names of any professional trade organizations of which he is a member.
6. Obtain a written estimate that clearly states exactly what work will be done, how long it will take to complete the job after the work begins, and the approximate cost of the job.
7. Beware of any conditions requiring unusually large payments of money before the work begins.
8. Ask the contractor to show you a current certificate of insurance for Workmen's Compensation and general liability coverage. Without this certificate, you could be liable for any damages to equipment or injuries that occur on the job.
9. Make sure the contractor obtains the building permit. Never apply for the permit yourself unless you plan to do the work.

Listen to your intuition. If you don't feel comfortable with a particular contractor, you should consider someone new.