

Consumer Information – Contractors

Choosing the Right One

If the project you are planning needs to be done by a contractor, here are several steps you should take to find the one who's right for you.

- Ask people you know for referrals on contractors, or call St. Pete Beach Building Department at 363-9273. While the city cannot recommend a specific contractor, we may be able to provide you with information about a contractor you are considering using.
- Find a contractor familiar with the type of work you want to do, and ask him if you can view some of his past work. If this isn't possible, ask him to provide references of owners for whom he has done similar work.
- Make sure you are comfortable with the contractor and that good communication exists.
- Make sure the contractor is licensed with the city and has no previous complaints against him by calling 363-9241.
- Check to see if the contractor is insured. He should carry comprehensive policies to protect his business and your property, including public liability, property damage protection, worker's compensation and coverage of damage, which might become evident in the year after completion.
- Ask for written quotes with all details from three different bidders. But remember-the lowest price is not always the best one. It could mean a misunderstanding of the work being quoted, a mistake in the quote or lesser quality workmanship and materials.

The Contract

Regardless of the relationship you develop with your contractor, all details and agreements about the job should be in writing. Here are some tips to remember:

- Make sure to include the building plans and/or work specifications in the contract.
- Specify the start and finish dates in the contract to protect your interests, but also realize that bad weather, unavailable materials or other problems may affect these dates.
- Include pay schedules for the work and itemized prices for the work.
- Have an Attorney review all contracts and related documents before you sign.

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- Don't make a large first payment, and don't pay for the project in full until work is completed and/or after an approved final inspection by our office.
- Request in writing any warranties or guarantees on the work.
- Make sure you and the contractor both sign the agreement, with each of you keeping original copies.
- Request a “release of lien(s)” before making a final payment.