



The Smart Consumer CHECKLIST

"Because Price Should Not Be the Only Thing to Consider"

There is no greater investment in one's life than their home. Before you let just anyone with a tool belt onto your property, be sure that the contractor whom you're entrusting your family's largest investment with is honest, reliable, and qualified.

To help you, the Ohio and Vicinity Regional Council of Carpenters understands how much you're putting on the line for your home remodeling and new home building project. As a service to the community, we suggest you complete this Smart Consumer Checklist before hiring any contractor for any part of your project:

Are you licensed in the State of Ohio?

- **No?** Think twice before hiring this contractor - many "fly by night" outfits can say they are a contractor, but what guarantee do you have that they will deliver what they promise?
- **Yes?** Ask for a copy of the license and make sure it's current.

Am I required to give money up front, and if so, what guarantees do I have that it will be used to complete my project?

- A reputable contractor will put everything in writing, and will supply a list of deadlines that will be met to give you a method of checking the project's progress. Ask to schedule a payment plan based on the job's progress (referred to as "draws").

Do you have any references?

- **No?** Move on.
- **Yes?** Check them, by phone and by driving to that job site to see the work in person.

Is your company bonded and insured?

- **No?** If your property is damaged, this contractor has no safety-net to cover costs.
- **Yes?** Ask for proof.

Are your employees covered by Workers Compensation?

- **No?** Hiring this contractor places your financial security at risk. If someone without workers compensation benefits from his employer is injured while working on your home, the liability for their injuries can fall on you and your home owner's insurance.
- **Yes?** Ask for the contractor's workers compensation identification number.

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Is your company registered with the Ohio Unemployment Bureau?

- **No?** Think about the retention rate of this contractor's employees. Do they have the benefits that will keep them on your project until it's completed?
- **Yes?** Ask for proof.

Does your company use its own employees to perform the work or does it hire sub-contractors?

- **Subcontractors?** Again, think about reliability. Your contractor is at the mercy of the subcontractor and, like you, will have to hope they show up for work everyday
- If sub-contractors are being used, and you still want to go with this contractor, make sure to ask if the subcontractor is:
 - Licensed in the State of Ohio?
 - Registered with the Ohio Bureau of Workers Compensation?
 - Bonded and insured?

Does your company have an OSHA-certified safety training program?

- **No?** What guarantees does this contractor offer to prove he conducts a safe work site? Again, your liability could be at stake if injuries occur on your property.
- **Yes?** Ask to see the OSHA certification card.

Do your employees or sub-contractors participate in a skill-enhancement training program?

- **No?** What assurance do you have that the latest techniques, tools, and materials are being used properly on your project? Out-of-date skills increases the chance for error, lengthens the time spent on a project, and could create the need for repairs and rework after the project is completed, which increases the cost of a project.
- **Yes?** Ask for proof by requesting to see certification cards of the latest courses completed.

Are your employees and/or sub-contractors drug tested?

- **No?** Ohio is nationally known for its construction drug testing program. If you don't get a positive answer to this, we recommend you do not hire this contractor.
- **Yes?** Ask for proof.

Do your employees have hospitalization and a pension plan?

- **No?** What incentive does a worker have to be productive and reliable?
- Professional carpenters who are treated fairly by their employer are more reliable, more productive and take their work more seriously. And, their positive attitude shows in their workmanship.

Checking Up on Your Contractor

The web site www.ohio.gov is an excellent resource to verify answers your prospective contractor gives to you about their workers compensation and unemployment compensation accounts. Or, call the Ohio Unemployment Bureau at 877-644-6562 and the Bureau of Workers Compensation at 800-OHIOBWC (644-6292).

Need a reputable contractor?

Visit www.ovrcc.com and click the "Contractors" link for a complete list of qualified, reputable, reliable, professional, and trained contractors who can answer all of the above questions with positive responses.



**RETOOLING, REBUILDING AND
REJUVENATING FOR A STRONGER OHIO**

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