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HIRING A CONTRACTOR

ANY contractor offering services in the city is required to register on an annual basis and have valid insurance on file with the city. The contractor registration ordinances are LCO§1321 and LCO§1323.

Tips on selecting the right contractor for your job:

- ALWAYS get a minimum of three estimates for the work in writing. Expect estimates to be close to each other if they are bidding on the same scope of work, with similar materials and quality of work. Choose established businesses. Look for contractors that belong to trade associations such as the “National Association of the Remodeling Industry” (NARI) or the “National Association of Home Builders” (NAHB).
- ALWAYS ask for and check references. Ask the references about the work performed, the quality of the work, and the professionalism of the workers. Also check with the Better Business Bureau for a report on contractors you are considering www.cleveland.bbb.org
- ALWAYS confirm the contractor is currently registered with the city. There are no legitimate reasons for a contractor not to be registered. It is the law.
- ALWAYS ask who will be performing the work. Some firms hire subcontractors to complete the work. Ask for and check subcontractor references and registrations.
- ALWAYS ask for a written contract that lists the full scope of work, materials to be used, payment terms (if applicable), warranty terms, and who will handle disputes. Be sure to obtain contact information from the contractor(s) including a business address (NOT P.O. Box)
- ALWAYS obtain copies of permits and inspection records for your project. Keep them in your house records. NEVER hire a contractor who asks you to obtain a permit for the work they are performing.
- If an advance payment is required to start the job, only pay when the materials are on site. Final payment should only be made at the completion of the job, after the city has made the final inspection and issued a “certificate of completion” if required (some work does not require permits – call the Building Department to confirm).
- Contractors and maintenance staff are required to have an EPA Lead Safe Certification anytime more than six square feet of lead paint, and/or when ANY number of windows are replaced in pre-1978 homes, schools, day care centers and other places where children spend time. For more information about Lead Safe contractors contact LakewoodAlive at (216) 521-0655. Below is a link to the EPA list of certified contractors: <https://cfpub.epa.gov/flpp/pub/index.cfm?do=main.firmSearch>

The City maintains a list of currently Registered Contractors. It is not an endorsement and offers no consumer protections.