



AVOID HOME REPAIR FRAUD

1. Get several bids.

- Try to get written bids or estimates from at least three different contractors. Check out the contractor.

2. Get the contractor's full name, address and phone number.

- Ask for references and call them.
- Check with the Better Business Bureau and courthouse for criminal history and civil cases against the contractor.
- For repairs that cost more than \$10,000, ask the contractor for a copy of their Certificate of Registration with the Texas Residential Construction Commission.
- Be careful when dealing with contractors who have out-of-state license plates. Get it in writing.

3. Get a written contract.

- Specify the work to be done.
- Specify the price.
- Don't sign anything you don't understand.

4. Control the money.

- Do not pay for the entire job up front.
- Try to pay as little as possible up front.
- It is against the law for contractors in disaster areas to take any money unless they have a local office in your county or one county over for at least one year.
- Insist on waiting to pay the full amount until after the work is finished.
- You are protected by special rules if the contractor does not have a local office in your county or the next county over.
- Do not make the final payment until you have inspected the work. Make sure you are completely satisfied with the repairs.
- Do not pay in cash.

Report bad contractors to: Better Business Bureau; the Texas Attorney General; the local district attorney; and Lone Star Legal Aid.

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