

Tips for avoiding “Storm-chaser” scams and how to find a reputable contractor

1. **Say NO** to cash only deals, high pressure sales tactics and high upfront payments. Only work with a contractor who will sign a contract that outlines the entire project and budget.
2. Don't pay more than 10% of the job budget before the work starts. If there is significant work to be done, this could go as high as 30%.
3. Talk to your insurance company to verify coverage from your policy. Don't sign a contract until you know what will be paid for by insurance. **Do not** sign over your insurance payment to the contractor.
4. Make sure your contractor obtains the proper permits for the project. Many fly-by-night contractors will suggest that a job can be done without permits to save money. Licensed professional contractors will always get permits. The homeowner should not get the permit.
5. Be wary of someone who contacts you first, especially if they say they are working in the neighborhood and have “leftover supplies”. This is a common scam.
6. **Check references.** Call past customers, check online sites such as the Better Business Bureau, Greensboro Builders Association, Yelp, Angie's List, Home Advisor.
7. Work with local businesses that have proper id, licenses and insurance. Ask how long company has been in business, ask for permanent business address and to see proof of license and insurance.
8. Sign a detailed contract that outlines the work to be done, deadlines, progress payments and materials to be used. Get lien releases and receipts for products. If your contractor doesn't pay his subcontractors or suppliers they can put a lien against your house.
9. **Get two to three estimates** from different companies. This will let you know if the “deal” you are being offered is too good to be true.
10. Beware of any contractor who can start work immediately, good contractors are busy.