



COHEN GARELICK & GLAZIER

A Professional Corporation of Attorneys at Law

Home Improvement Scams

Your home is your castle . . . and it is also probably your most valuable investment. Unfortunately, many homeowners unwittingly hire crooked contractors to improve or repair their castles, and they wind up being cheated out of money or paying for inferior work. The home improvement business is crawling with cheats. Before signing on the dotted line, remember the following:

1. Be wary of a salesman who comes to your home uninvited, especially if he claims he was doing some work for your neighbor or was just “in the neighborhood.”
2. Ask for references, with names and telephone numbers—nothing drives away a swindler quicker than a request for references.
3. Beware of the low ball bids or offers that seem too good to be true, because they usually are.
4. Beware of people who ask for a large “deposit” or ask to be paid in full before the work is done.
5. Read everything carefully before you sign it, and make sure you understand all of the terms.
6. Do not sign a contract with blanks in it.
7. Beware of a salesman who claims that his offer is for a “limited time” or is “today only,” especially where he is pressuring you to sign before you have read the contract.

If you have a complaint about your home improvement project, begin by trying to resolve it with the contractor. Honest mistakes can occur and can be easily corrected. Make sure to follow up with a letter that you send by certified mail and keep a copy for your records. If this approach is unsuccessful, contact your local or state consumer protection office.