SCAM ALERT!

Beware Contractor Con Artists

Contractor fraud continues to be a problem in our community; but if you do your home-work you can prevent fraud. The Okaloosa County Sheriff’s Office advises consumers to take the time to thoroughly check out contractors and use this checklist to ensure a safer contracting experience.

- Be wary of contractors that contact you door-to-door or by telephone; especially those offering **bargains, scare tactics, or immediate service**.

- Get at **least three bids** and don’t necessarily choose the lowest bid. You’ll probably get what you paid for and you may not be happy.

- Do **NOT** do business with an unlicensed contractors. Check the contractor's license with your local building department and the Department of Business & Professional Regulations (DBPR) at [http://www.myfloridalicense.com/dbpr/](http://www.myfloridalicense.com/dbpr/)

- Get a reliability report from the Better Business Bureau (BBB) at [www.bbb.org](http://www.bbb.org)

- Get and check at least three customer references.

- Insist on a **written contract that details the work** to be done and includes the cost of materials used with the start and completion dates.

- Pay minimal upfront for the cost of materials as stated in the contract. **Do not pay in cash.** Pay by check only and make sure everything is documented on all paper work. Including on the check provided.

- Pay in full only when 1) the job is complete 2) you’re satisfied 3) you’ve received a “lien waiver” showing the contractor has paid sub contractors and suppliers and 4) an inspector has signed off on the job (if required .)