



NORTH CAROLINA LICENSING BOARD FOR GENERAL CONTRACTORS

[FIND A LICENSED CONTRACTOR](#)

These important tips can protect you from substantial financial loss and emotional stress.

1. **Plan your project:** Plan out in detail what you want done and who you will need to complete it. No two projects are the same, and some may require a specially licensed contractor. Contact your local permitting office to see if permits are required to assure code compliance.
2. **Get several estimates:** When comparing estimates from different contractors, don't just compare the bottom-line cost. Look at the cost, quantity and quality of materials in each estimate. Be sure the estimate includes the total price, the materials to be used, a time table for payments and the expected time line for completion of the work.
3. **Verify the contractor's license:** In the State of North Carolina, a general contractor must be licensed if the contract is valued at \$30,000 or higher. [Search here](#) for proof that the contractor you may be working with is licensed.
4. **Check at least 3 references:** Ask your contractor for written references. Contact each reference and ask if they were satisfied with the contractor's work and if the contractor kept to the schedule and contract terms.
5. **Require a written contract:** The contract should be a detailed description of the work to be done, the material to be used and the equipment to be installed. Be sure there is a schedule of payments and a time line for when the work will be completed. Be sure you understand the contract before you sign it. Any changes that occur should be noted in writing.
6. **Don't make a large down payment:** The down payment you pay in order for work to begin should be minimal. Beware of contractors asking for a large down payment so that they can purchase the materials to begin your project.
7. **Make payments as work is completed:** Set up a payment schedule that follows the work as it is being completed. Never pay for something that has not been completed. Do not pay for anything in cash.
8. **Monitor the job in progress:** Check in regularly on the progress of the work. Permits should be displayed by the contractor while the work is being done.
9. **Don't make the final payment until the job is complete:** Before making the final payment make sure that you are satisfied with the completed work. Verify that all liens have been released.
10. **Keep all paperwork related to the job:** Be sure to keep a record of all documents that pertain to your project. This includes the contract, any written changes, all bills and invoices, receipts of payments and all correspondence with your contractor. You should also include photos of the job in progress.

Resources

Better Business Bureau
703-276-0100
bbb.org

N.C. Department of Insurance
Building Code Enforcement
800-634-7854
ncosfm.gov/codes