HOME REPAIR
KNOW YOUR CONSUMER RIGHTS
ILLINOIS HOME REPAIR AND REMODELING ACT

As you prepare for your home repair / improvement project, it is important to ask the right questions in order to protect your investment. The tips in this guide should allow you to protect yourself and minimize the possibility that a misunderstanding may occur.

On January 1, 2000, Illinois Public Act 91-230 went into effect. This law is known as the Illinois Home Repair and Remodeling Act, and applies to all contractors engaged in home repair and remodeling.

1. Before beginning home repair or remodeling work, the value of which exceeds $1,000, the contractor must provide the customer with a written contract or work order, to be signed by the customer.

2. For any contract over $1,000.00, the contractor must provide the customer with a copy of the Home Repair: Know Your Consumer Rights pamphlet before beginning any home repair and remodeling projects. The customer must sign and date the acknowledgment form entitled “Consumer Rights Acknowledgement Form. Home Repair: Know Your Consumer Rights”.

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AVOIDING HOME REPAIR FRAUD

Please use extreme caution when confronted with the following warning signs of a potential scam:

1. Door-to-door salesperson(s) with no local connections who offer to do home repair work for substantially less than the market price.

2. Solicitations for repair work from a company that lists only a telephone number or a post office box number to contact, particularly if it is an out-of-state company.

3. Contractors who fail to provide references when requested.

4. People who offer to inspect your home for free. Do not admit anyone into your home unless he or she can present authentic identification establishing his or her business status. When in doubt, do not hesitate to call the worker’s employer to verify his or her identity.

5. Contractors who demand cash payment for a job or who ask you to make a check payable to a person other than the owner or company name.

6. Offers from a contractor to drive you to the bank to withdraw funds to pay for the work.
CONTRACT TIPS

1. Get all estimates in writing.

2. Do not be induced into signing a contract by high-pressure sales tactics.

3. Never sign a contract with blank spaces or one you do not fully understand. If you are taking out a loan to finance the work, do not sign the contract before your lender approves the loan.

4. Remember, you have three business days from the time you sign your contract to cancel any contract if the sale is made at your home. The contractor cannot deprive you of this right by initiating work, selling your contract to a lender or any other tactic. If you are planning to file a claim with your insurance company to pay for the work, you may cancel the contract in one of two ways, whichever occurs first: (1) within five business days after receiving written notice from the insurance company denying your claim; or (2) within 30 days after you sent a claim to the insurance company.

5. If the contractor does business under a name other than the contractor’s real name, the business must either be incorporated or registered under the Assumed Business Name Act. Check with the Secretary of State to see if the business is incorporated or with the county clerk to see if the business has registered under the Assumed Business Name Act.

6. Homeowners should check with local and county units of government to determine if permits or inspections are required.

7. Determine whether the contractor will guarantee his or her work and products.

8. Determine whether the contractor has the proper insurance.

9. Do not sign a certificate of completion or make final payment until the work is done to your satisfaction.

10. Know who provides supplies and labor for any work performed on your home. Suppliers and subcontractors have a right to file a lien against your property if the general contractor fails to pay them. To protect your property, request lien waivers from the general contractor.
BASIC TERMS TO BE INCLUDED IN YOUR CONTRACT

1. Contractor’s full name, address and telephone number. Illinois law requires that those selling home repair and improvement services provide their customers with notice of any change to their business name or address that comes about prior to the agreed dates for beginning or completing the work.

2. A description of the work to be performed.

3. Starting and estimated completion dates.

4. Total cost of work to be performed.

5. Schedule and method of payment, including down payment, subsequent and final payment.

6. A provision stating the grounds for termination of the contract by either party. However, the homeowner must pay the contractor for work completed. If the contractor fails to commence or complete work within the contracted time period, the homeowner may cancel and may be entitled to a refund of any down payment or other payments made towards the work upon written demand by certified mail.

7. If all or any part of the claim or contract is not a covered loss under the insurance policy, you may cancel the contract by mailing or delivering written notice to the contractor at the contractor’s place of business on or before midnight on the fifth business day after you receiving notice from your insurer or the thirtieth business day after receipt of a properly executed proof of loss by the insurer from the insured. If you cancel, any payments you made under the contract will be returned within 10 business days following receipt by the contractor of your cancellation notice. If, however, the contractor has provided any goods or services related to a catastrophe, acknowledged and agreed to by the insured homeowner in writing to be necessary to prevent damage to the premises, the contractor is entitled to the reasonable value of such goods and services.

8. Illinois law requires contractors who offer roofing work to include their Illinois state roofing license name and number on contracts and bids.

Obtain a copy of the signed contract and keep it in a safe place for reference as needed.
ATTORNEY GENERAL’S CONSUMER FRAUD HOTLINES

If you think you have been defrauded by a contractor or have any questions, please bring your concerns to the attention of your State’s Attorney or the Illinois Attorney General’s Office.


SPRINGFIELD
800-243-0618
TTY: 877-844-5461

CHICAGO
800-386-5438
TTY: 800-964-3013

CARBONDALE
800-243-0607
TTY: 877-675-9339

To file a complaint against a roofing contractor, contact the Illinois Department of Financial and Professional Regulation.
312-814-6910

or file a complaint directly on its website
https://www.idfpr.com/Admin/Complaints.asp