

# Home Improvement Safe-Remodeling Fact Sheet

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Planning a home addition or remodeling project can be exciting, fun and filled with visions of a new lifestyle. To help ensure a successful venture, Scottsdale Remodeling Pros provides this essential safe-remodeling fact sheet.

## Select a Reliable and Competent Contractor

The successful beginning, middle and end of your home improvement project hinges on the skills and dependability of your general contractor. Whether you are adding an extra bedroom for your newborn daughter or merely installing new gutter guards, the reliability of the contractor marks the quality and success of the job.

When it comes to home or business construction projects, caution is the key to wise decisions. Some building improvements demand high dollar materials and months of supervised labor. Even basic, single-room home renovations can be costly and time consuming. Hiring the right contractor makes the difference between beauty and sloppy, satisfaction and disappointment, project completion and getting ripped off.

Here are six basic starting points:

1. Don't equivocate heavy advertising with quality or guaranteed professional legitimacy
2. Get written estimates
3. Do comparison pricing
4. Seek contractor performance reports from reliable co-workers, friends and neighbors
5. Seek and understand bidder explanations for price differences
6. Be wary of extreme low bidders.

## Choosing a Job-Specific Home Improvement Professional

Home improvement projects come in a variety of sizes and often differ in degree of complexity. Installing new gutters or storm windows is not so diverse as a full home addition project. Here are five types of construction project professionals:

1. Architects: Major structural changes to any building typically require the design skills of a home remodeling architect.
2. Designers: Typically focused on specific areas of modification, designers help homeowners and businesses renovate baths, kitchens and offices.
3. Design/Build Contractors: Sometimes you need a all-in-one service. Design/build contractors oversee construction projects from start to finish.
4. General Contractors: Overseeing your building or remodeling project is not easy. Most businesses and homeowners have not the skill or the time to manage every aspect of a project.

By dealing with architects, building permits, designers, scheduling issues, subcontractors, material purchase and more, general contractors lift the load of hands-on owner involvement.

5. Specialty Contractors: DIY homeowners sometimes hire specialty contractors to handle particular products, such as bathroom fixtures and fireplaces.

## Avoiding the Scams

The home improvement industry has more than a fair share of crooked builders. Sometimes customers get what they pay for but what they pay for is not what they thought they were buying. This is a legal scam. For example:

You hire someone to pour a blacktop driveway. The contract calls for a four-inch thick pour. You check prices and the contractor is charging just a bit below the current going price. It sounds like a great deal, and you will be there to make sure the project is done correctly.

Here's the scam. The contractor pours a four-inch thick drive. You're happy. You go inside. Then comes the roller and the final thickness of your new four-inch drive flattens out to 2.5 inches. Depending on the wording of the contract, the pour may not be scrupulous but it can be legit.

The following ten tips will help keep you from getting nailed by a less than trustworthy home or business contractor. Avoid contractors, so-called who:

1. Ask you to get the building permits
2. Claims you will get a special pricing as a "demonstration" project
3. Expects cash-only payment
4. Has no listing in the local phone directory
5. Offers an unrealistic and out of the norm guarantee
6. Offers special material prices due to previous job overruns
7. Practices door-to-door job solicitation
8. Practices hard-sell methods that demand an immediate decision
9. Provides discounts, so-called, if you will bring in other customers
10. Seeks up-front payment for materials or the entire job

Special Note: If you must borrow money, find your own lender. Never take out a loan with a lender the contractor claims will help you get special interest rates or other loan reductions. Such a path sometimes leads into a home improvement loan scam that can cost you your home.

## Questions To Ask the Contractor

Interview. Interview every contractor on your list and every reference customer they provide. Here are ten points to question and confirm via personal research:

1. Length of time in business
2. Any recorded customer complaints
3. License and state of registration
4. Customer reference sheet

5. Name of insurance company
6. Number of business names
7. Address and Phone number
8. Completed similar project list
9. Permit requirements for project
10. Any current projects that can be viewed now

## **Additional Resources**

Always be sure that the contractor you decide to get quotes from or work with is licensed and reputable, in Arizona you can contact the Registrar Of Contractors at (602) 542-1525 or Toll Free Within AZ: 1-877-MY AZROC (1-877-692-9762) and on the web at <http://www.azroc.gov/> . Learning how to reduce your chances of falling victim to fraudulent business practices can save you financial, emotional and mental heartaches. For more information concerning deceptive and unfair home improvement practices, contact the FTC government website. Their secure online investigative tool is used worldwide by hundreds of civil law enforcement agencies.

Thank you for reviewing this Safe Remodeling Fact Sheet. Arizona Remodeling Pros American Custom Contracting provides reliable home improvement services in Scottsdale, Arizona.

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*Disclaimer: The information provided is not intended as legal advice. Consult with a lawyer or Registrar Of Contractors with questions regarding contracts or trade practices.*