

# I NEED A CONTRACTOR...

## WHAT DO I DO NOW???



### Get Recommendations!

- Friends, family, and neighbors can tell you about their customer experience
- Internet – A simple search of the internet and social media can turn up articles and reviews, positive or negative.
- Your insurance company may have a preferred list.
- The Better Business Bureau
- State licensing agencies can verify trade licenses and track serious complaints.

### Ask the right questions:

- Will they give references?
- What is their timeline for starting/finishing the project?
- Do they use subcontractors? Who?
- Do they have insurance, including coverage for employee injuries on the job?

**Get multiple bids**, and beware of any bid that's significantly lower than the others.

**Present a written scope of work** detailing what you expect.

**Pick someone who specializes in the type of work you're seeking.**

**Get written estimates** that itemize parts and labor.

**Determine a payment schedule.** Contractors generally expect at least 10% up front, or at least enough to cover initial material purchases. Withhold final payment until you are fully satisfied with the work and it has passed all City inspections. ***Never pay 100% up front.***

**Make sure your contractor gets a building permit (if required) and passes the final inspection.** You can check with the City to verify. If the contractor fails to obtain a permit or pass inspection, it may fall back on the homeowner to make it right.

**Put everything in writing.**

**Ask to see their professional license (if any) and insurance.**

**Hire local** – Verify that the contractor has a local, physical address.

**Go with your gut** – You have to be comfortable with this person in your house.

# CONTRACTOR LICENSING & REGISTRATION

## HOW CAN I TELL IF MY CONTRACTOR IS THE REAL DEAL?



**Plumbers, electricians, and HVAC contractors must be licensed by the State of Texas. All types of contractors must be registered with the City of Coppell.**

### **Why should I look for a licensed contractor?**

- For a tradesman to achieve a Master-level trade license, it takes years of experience and training, and binds the licensee to a code of conduct that includes both technical skill and businesses practices.
- Only licensed contractors can obtain required building permits from the City.

### **How can I tell if my contractor is licensed by the State?**

- Ask them to show you their license. Note the number, type, and expiration date.
- Plumbers, electricians, and HVAC contractors are required under licensing law to display their trade license number on all of their company vehicles, advertisements, and business documents.
- Search for them by name or license number online to verify.

### **For more information on contractor licensing, see the links below:**

- Plumbing – Texas State Board of Plumbing Examiners ([www.tsbpe.texas.gov](http://www.tsbpe.texas.gov))
- Electricians – Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation ([www.tdlr.texas.gov](http://www.tdlr.texas.gov))
- HVAC – Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation ([www.tdlr.texas.gov](http://www.tdlr.texas.gov))

### **Does the City of Coppell check contractors' credentials?**

- Yes. Contractors of all kinds who pull permits in Coppell have to register with the City on an annual basis. When a contractor applies for registration, the City verifies their required State licensing and that they have liability insurance (\$1 million coverage per occurrence). The City cannot recommend one contractor over another, but the City verifies their credentials and inspects their work.