



CITY OF CORNING

A Message from the Chief of Police...

Maintenance of your home and property can sometimes be a stressful time. While the Corning City Police Department cannot recommend contractors or provide legal advice, we are always there to assist you whenever you might encounter situations during your endeavor over which you have no control. We want you to be aware of the statutes that might dictate what you can and cannot do.

The City's Code Enforcement Office is always available to provide you with that information. You should be able to make informed choices about the contractor you ultimately choose to perform services for you.

It is very important for you to call us immediately for assistance if you feel you have been unduly taken advantage of, or been a victim of a fraudulent contractor. The sooner we can pursue such individuals, the better the chances they can be brought to justice.

Our goal is to provide you with quality police service in a spirit of community cooperation. You help all of us when you report incidents that have a potential ill-effect on all the neighbors in our community.

Jeffrey R. Spaulding

Tips on Hiring a Contractor

BEGINNING THE PROCESS

Whether you plan to build, remodel or add-on, your home improvement project may require the services of a contractor. No matter what the cost of your project, choosing a contractor is very important. The following information may help you make good, well informed decisions.

RESEARCH YOUR PROJECT

Your research should include what has to be done, the best ways to do the work and the types of materials that may be used and their cost. Ask friends, hardware stores and the local building inspector before you make final decisions.

GET THE NAMES OF SEVERAL CONTRACTORS.

Start with friends and neighbors who have had similar work done. Home improvement stores and building supply stores deal with local contractors and may be able to get you started with some names.

GET ESTIMATES.

It's usually a good idea to ask at least three contractors to estimate the costs of your project. This is normally a free service and it helps prepare you for negotiating a final contract. Make sure that the estimates detail the scope of the work, the types of materials that will be used, and the total cost of the project. If you are borrowing money for the job, it is a good idea to discuss the estimate with the lender.

COMPARE THE ESTIMATES.

Once you receive estimates, take time to compare them carefully. Be sure each one includes everything you want. If an estimate contains unwanted or unneeded items, keep these in mind for possible negotiations with the contractor, but remember to ask questions about anything you do not understand. Keep in mind the lowest estimate is not necessarily the best.

BEWARE OF CON ARTISTS

Door-to-door contractor fraud is a growing problem. Contractors do not normally solicit work in this manner. Here are some things to look out for:

- Arrival in an unmarked truck or van.
- A "contractor" claiming "We've just done a job nearby and have some material left, so we can do the job half the price."
- A post office address with no street address or a phone number that is just an answering service.
- High pressure sales tactics.
- Refusal to give you a written estimate, contract, and local references.

SIGNING A CONTRACT

Once you've agreed on a contractor, get the estimate in writing and in explicit detail. It should include:

- An exact description of all the work to be performed.
- A list of the materials to be used.
- The total dollar amount of the contract and a schedule for payments. Be cautious about a contractor who demands a large payment up front (50 percent or more). Contractors are accustomed to pay-as-you go schedules or waiting until the job is done.
- Any promises made by the contractor.
- Who will be responsible for getting the necessary building permit?
- The starting and completion dates.
- Any warranty (for example, a Home Owners Warranty) and a holdback clause which allows you to withhold final payment until sometime after the job's completion to allow you time to inspect the job.

If there are any problems, this can serve as an incentive for the contractor to fix them.

- Cleanup. This item is often neglected, but should be considered especially if a good deal of debris will be generated.
- The contractor's signature as well as your own.

If you have questions or need more information call the Code Enforcement Office at 962-0340 ext.137. A Code Officer can answer questions about the placement of buildings on your property, when a building permit is required and other information relating to your project. The City will not recommend contractors but can tell you if a contractor has a current insurance certificate on file.