

**HOW  
TO  
CHOOSE  
A  
CONTRACTOR**

**“Common Sense Tips”**

Compliments of the



Pinellas  
County Construction  
Licensing Board

**How to choose a  
contractor**  
“Common sense tips”

**References:**

Ask friends, co-workers, family and neighbors who they have used successfully. Ask the contractor for references and check them out.

Call Justice and Consumer Services, Better Business Bureau then call or visit PCCLB to verify licensure and insurance and that there are no complaints filed against this contractor. Our files are public record.

Get bids from several different contractors.

Make sure that they are all bidding on the same work.

Don't be pressured into making a quick decision, and never sign a blank Contract.

Verbal contracts are not easy to enforce. Get it in writing. Make sure everything that you agree on is in writing. This includes the warranty. Both you and the contractor should sign the contract.

Get a start and end date written into the contract. Agree in writing what penalty there will be if there are delays.

**Never pay the full contract price up front.** A small deposit is reasonable.

Get release of liens as you make payments. And **get the final release of lien when you pay the final payment.** If you don't do so it could result in liens on your property from the suppliers or contractors.

**Never pull your own permit** If a contractor asks you to pull permits, that is a red flag. This takes the responsibility away from the contractor and puts it on you. If there are code violations and the contractor does not correct them, you will be held responsible for correcting them and could even end up with liens on your property by the County or City for code or zoning violations.

Make sure that inspections are done and a final inspection is passed on the job. Preferably before or at time of final payment.

**Insurance:**

Ask the contractor for proof of insurance. This is for your protection. He should have liability insurance to cover any property damage and workers compensation for any employees. He could have an exemption if he is working alone.

**Bids, Quotes and Estimates:**

Ask for written quotes with all details from three different bidders. Compare design plans, grade and quality of materials and length of time projected for the job.

**Remember the lowest price is not always the best one.**

**Contracts:**

The contract should specify the responsibilities and obligations of both parties.

Reputable contractors will furnish a contract that specifies pay schedules as work progresses and itemized prices for the work. Make sure the plans and specifications are in the contract.

Contract should also include any items of work that will not be performed by the contractor.

Specify start and finish dates in the contract to protect your interests but realize that bad weather and unavailable materials can delay the start and finish date.

Other Agencies to call:

**Pinellas County  
Justice & Consumer Services**

15251-Roosevelt Blvd Ste 209  
Clearwater, Fl. 33760  
Phone: (727)464-6200  
Fax: (727) 464-6129  
Website :  
[WWW.pinellascounty.org](http://WWW.pinellascounty.org)

**Better Business Bureau**

5830-142<sup>nd</sup> Ave N  
Largo, FL.  
Phone: (727) 535-5522

**Tampa Fl. 33612**

Phone: 813-930-7564  
Fax: 813-930-7645

**State of Florida**

**Dept of Business and  
Professional Regulation**

1940-North Monroe  
Tallahassee, Fl. 32399  
850-488-6603  
813-554-2240

**Division of Worker's Comp**

9215-N Florida Ave Ste #107  
Tampa, Fl. 33612  
Phone: 813-930-7564  
Fax: 813-930-7645

A complete list of contractors licensed in Pinellas County can be found at the PCCLB's website or contact the PCCLB at the numbers or address listed below to verify licensure:

**Pinellas County  
Construction Licensing  
Board**

**At  
727-536-4720**

**or  
online at  
[www.pcclb.com](http://www.pcclb.com)**

**Investigators:**

**Jim Mapes  
Don Balas**

**Connie Garriques**  
Phone: (727) 531-4784  
(727) 536-4720  
Fax: (727) 538-4797

**12600-Belcher Rd  
Ste 102  
Largo, Fl. 33773**