

AVOIDING HOME IMPROVEMENT SCAMS

NARI's Top Ten Signs a Contractor is Untrustworthy

The National Association of the Remodeling Industry (NARI) offers homeowners these top ten warning signs that a home improvement contractor may not be reputable:

1. You can't verify the name, address, telephone number or credentials of the remodeler.
2. The salesperson tries to pressure you into signing a contract.
3. The salesperson tells you a special price is available only if you sign the contract "today."
4. No references are furnished.
5. Information you receive from the contractor is out-of-date or no longer valid.
6. You are unable to verify the license or insurance information.
7. You are asked to pay for the entire job in advance, or to pay in cash to a salesperson instead of by check or money order to the company itself.
8. The company cannot be found in the telephone book, is not listed with the local Better Business Bureau, or with a local trade association, such as NARI.
9. The contractor does not offer, inform or extend notice of your right to cancel the contract within three days. Law requires notification in writing of your "Right of Recision". This grace period allows you to change your mind and declare the contract null and void without penalty (if the agreement was solicited at some place other than the contractor's place of business or appropriate trade premises-in your home, for instance.)
10. You are given vague or reluctant answers or your questions are not answered to your satisfaction.

In addition, avoid contractors who exhibit poor communication skills, are impatient and do not listen to you, or situations in which the contractor is not accessible. Your needs as the homeowner should be addressed, not just the work at hand. Your contractor should also present examples of previous projects if asked, along with references. Don't hesitate to call those references – a reputable contractor will be happy you did.

NARI is a professional association whose member companies voluntarily subscribe to a strict code of ethics. Consumers can search TRUSTNARI.ORG to find a remodeler who is a member of NARI in Central Ohio.

For more information about finding a qualified remodeling professional, consumers can call the NARI of Central Ohio office at (614) 895-3080 and request a free copy of NARI's brochure, "How to Select a Remodeling Professional," or visit TRUSTNARI.ORG.