

NOVEMBER 2020 CCDC SAFETY MESSAGE

SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS WHEN USING LOCAL CONTRACTORS

Many people are using local contractors do home repair projects or property work. Finding a good contractor is important — a home improvement project gone wrong can cost you from a physical and a safety perspective. You may have unexpected costs if the contractor does not employ good safety practices and there is an injury to you or a worker on your property.

A good ad is not proof a contractor does quality work or works safely. Find out for yourself by checking with others who have used the contractors you are considering. Check out a contractor's reputation on online ratings sites you trust. Ask the contractors to view work in progress to observe their work practices. Check with the Better Business Bureau, your appropriate government agencies for the contractor's registration as well as doing an Internet search for lawsuits

Most states and localities require permits for building projects sometimes even for simple jobs like decks or removing a tree. A competent contractor will get all the necessary permits before starting work on your project. You may want to choose a contractor familiar with the permitting process and local ordinances (noise, equipment placement, road obstruction, etc.) in your county, city, or town.

Contractors should have insurance including personal liability, worker's compensation, and property damage coverage. Ask for copies of insurance certificates, and make sure they are current, or you could be held liable for any injuries and damages that occur during the project.

Some select on site safety considerations for the property owner to consider before, during, and after the project include the following:

- Proper PPE (contractor supplied) – hard hats, safety glasses, work gloves, work boots, hearing protection, special clothing (Nomex, Tyvek, reinforced, insulated).
- Proper equipment – equipment in good repair and clean, equipment appropriate for the job, mechanized equipment to reduce physical requirements, cones, barriers and safety flags to mark work areas or obstructions, proper equipment for performing electrical work, scaffolding in good shape.
- Proper safety practices – walkdown and risk analysis before job with the contractor, wearing PPE, tying off ladders, marking excavations, reinforcing trenches / holes, flagging overhead wires, is a local government post work inspection required.
- Proper chemical / environmental practices – chemicals are labeled in proper containers, chemicals are stored away during non-job hours, chemicals will be removed by the contractor, environmental barriers are used to minimize run off, MSDS sheets are available.

For a more comprehensive list of safety consideration, use OSHA's basic workplace requirements and identify those applicable to the work you are having done on your property. Keep yourself, your contractor, and your property safe.

THINK SMART, BE AWARE, BE FLEXIBLE, BE EDUATED