



**CITY OF PORT JERVIS**  
BUILDING DEPARTMENT  
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## **13 STEPS TO HIRING A CONTRACTOR**

Dear Resident or Permit Applicant:

If you are planning a home improvement project like a deck, a new bathroom, or a garage, you will probably need to hire a building contractor. This is not always an easy task. There is no shortage of building contractor horror stories. Almost everyone has heard tales of damage, scams, shoddy workmanship, and builders who disappear in the middle of a project. In fact, except for auto repair shops and car dealerships, no other industry has generated as many complaints, according to the Council of Better Business Bureaus. It would seem that finding a reliable and qualified contractor is not an easy task. You can put the odds on your side, however, by following the following advice.

- **Seek a referral from someone you know who is happy with his or her contractor's work.**
- **Solicit bids from at least three contractors.**
- **Be wary of proposals that are much lower than any other proposals.**
- **Contact the Better Business Bureau to check out any contractors that submit bids.**
- **Insist on a written contract that outlines your entire agreement, including contracts, warranties, and plans**
- **Make sure there are no blank spaces on anything you sign.**
- **Insist upon a written warranty on all materials and work.**
- **Get all building permits and variances before starting the project and identify the contractor on the applications.**
- **Inspect all work before signing a completion certificate.**
- **Withhold final payment until the entire project is finished and inspected.**
- **Get a contractor's affidavit that all subcontractors and material suppliers have been paid before making final payment.**
- **Report any misrepresentations, shoddy work, failure to honor contracts, unlicensed contractors, or other problems to the appropriate licensing board.**

If you select your contractor carefully in the beginning, you are less likely to have problems later. While screening contractors may seem like more work than the construction project itself, the effort can save enormously in money, annoyance and time.

**THE CITY OF PORT JERVIS REQUIRES ALL ELECTRICAL AND PLUMBING CONTRACTORS TO BE LICENSED WITH THE CITY.**