

## Hiring a Contractor Tip Sheet



1. Write down what you need done, your expectations of the job and timelines. Be realistic. Do this **BEFORE** you get quotes so that you are getting a price from each service provider for the same job.
2. When meeting with contractors have a friend or family member with you – They may think of a question you should ask, make notes for you or help clear up a misunderstanding.
3. Get at least 3 quotes in writing and review them. Why are they different? How long will it take them to complete the job? The cheapest is not necessarily the best and a job done right the first time will cost less in the end. Remember, quality of work may be more important than price.
4. Research each company. One source is customer reviews on the internet.
5. Once you have chosen a contractor, **agree on a written work plan**. Changes should be made in writing. Do not permit work to start without a signed, written contract that includes start and completion dates, exact costs, specific work to be done, include protection of your property, clean up and removal of debris. Be sure to read the fine print carefully. Do not make large payments up front. The usual is 20%. Stagger your payments according to work stages and do not make a final payment until the job is completed to your satisfaction. Pay by check or credit card for added protection. Paying by credit card provides some recourse should the job not be completed as stated in the contract.
6. Set good boundaries – be clear about what spaces in your home or yard are off limits and communicate regularly with the contractor.
7. If things don't go well – **speak to the contractor/worker right away**. Often times it is simply a misunderstanding and you may reach a mutually agreeable compromise.
8. If things are not resolved – call the Seniors Home Supports person who gave you the referrals. They may have further advice for you. In so doing, you may stop others from being taken advantage of.