

Tips for Avoiding Deck and Paver Renovation Scams!

From C&D Thin Pavers & Coping, Florida's Leading Manufacturer of One Inch Brick Pavers

There's good news and bad news when it comes to remodeling your home in this economy.

The face of the construction industry has changed dramatically over the past two years in conjunction with the economy. Declining property values have put a screeching halt to new construction as a whole. Residents are staying put in their current homes, waiting for an up-tick in the economy to help restore home values to prior levels. When and whether or not that happens is anyone's guess.

One thing for certain is that remodeling is at an all time high, and low interest rates on home equity lines of credit are making it more affordable than ever to freshen up your home. This increase in the remodeling sector has created an onslaught of contractors venturing into this arena for the first time. That's a "good news-bad news" scenario. More contractors means greater choices than ever before. Pricing is highly competitive and projects are more affordable than they have been in years. However, consumers should be aware that there are negatives to this phenomenon as well. Many contractors getting into this business have very little expertise with remodeling. This is a different process than building from scratch, and homeowners who are unsuspecting can find themselves in a bad situation.

Here are a handful of tips to avoid getting caught in a remodeling scam:

① Obtain multiple estimates for your project. Consider obtaining a minimum of three bids for your project. This will provide the homeowner with a clear idea as to the costs involved. If one of the three is unusually low, there should be cause for concern. Usually, that indicates some shortcut in the project which could involve using lower tier materials or skipping essential steps in the process. All of this will come back as a burden on the consumer, and it is unlikely that the installer will be there to pick up the pieces and make things right.

② Do not provide payment up front for the bulk of the work. It is customary to pay anywhere between 25-50% of the total project costs up front, with one third being most typical. This upfront payment should be designated to pay for the materials used. Homeowners should insist on a release of lien issued by the material suppliers on the project prior to making final payment to their contractor. The State of Florida has very specific and enforceable lien laws designed to protect consumers and sup-



pliers from unscrupulous contractors. In order to protect their rights, the supplier may issue an NTO (Notice To Owner) to the homeowner within 45 days of the material delivery indicating they provided materials for the project. The supplier may then file a lien against the project should they not be paid. In that case, the homeowner would be required to pay the supplier directly for the materials, despite already paying their contractor for the materials.

③ Do some homework before acquiring proposals for your project. The best source of information is to contact the leading manufacturer of the primary building materials that will be used on your project. By calling the manufacturer, homeowners will receive referrals to installers who are reputable and have a history of quality work and fair business practices. Because manufacturers have a more intimate knowledge of the installers in their area, they can lessen the likelihood of having a bad experience with an unscrupulous contractor. Manufacturers receive feedback on a daily basis from homeowners regarding their contractor and the quality of their work. *That one call to the manufacturer for recommendations of installers for their project could be the most important step to ensuring a quality installation at a fair price.*

For referrals to the leading installers for pool deck, patio, walkway and driveway renovations in the Tampa area, give C&D Thin Pavers and Coping a call at 1-866-9-PAVERS. They are Florida's #1 manufacturer of remodel brick pavers and coping products. You can also visit their website at www.thinpavers.com and utilize their paver visualizer to explore the many colors and shapes of pavers for your next project. View C&D's products at their designer showroom located at 8989 Ulmerton Road, Largo, FL. □