



Emergency Home Repair Tips

In an emergency situation, consumers needing home repairs are more vulnerable to scams. Here are some tips to prevent problems, based on past consumer complaints.

Get lien waivers from anyone that you pay for home repairs.

1. Contact the Bureau of Consumer Protection, (800) 422-7128, the Better Business Bureau, (800) 273-1002 or (414) 847-6000, to find out if complaints have been filed against a contractor.
2. Get lien waivers from anyone that you pay for home repairs. It is vital to do this, because if the person collecting the money does not pay their supplier or workers, a lien could be put on your property. This can happen unless you have a lien waiver.
3. Consumers can avoid some problems by paying for materials themselves, dealing directly with the supplier.
4. Often “storm chasers” appear after a disaster, trying to make a quick buck by doing shoddy work or sometimes not doing any work. Try to get a local contractor to do the repairs. Ask contractors if they are subcontracting your job, and if so, who will actually be doing the work. They are required to disclose any subcontractors to you.
5. Get a written contract which is signed by both parties that includes, the contractor’s name and address, start and end dates, a full description of the work to be done, a detailed list of materials to be used, the total price for the job, and any statements of warranties. Prior to signing the contract, get a copy of the “Notice of Consumer’s Right to Receive Lien Waivers” from your contractor.



6. Have someone around to watch the work being done. That way, it is less likely that steps will be skipped and more likely the job will be done quickly and properly.
7. Request a copy of the contractor’s certificate of liability insurance.

For more information or to file a complaint, visit our website or contact:

Wisconsin Department of Agriculture,
Trade and Consumer Protection
Bureau of Consumer Protection
2811 Agriculture Drive, PO Box 8911
Madison, WI 53718-8911

Email: DATCPHotline@wi.gov

Website: datcp.wi.gov

PHONE: (800) 422-7128 TTY: (608) 224-5058

HI-EmergencyHomeRepairTips272 (rev 10/23)