

Make Smart Choices

Contracting for home improvements and storm repairs can pose many difficult problems if you are not careful.

Construction Lien Law

In order to be advised about liens by contractors or material suppliers who are not paid, you should file a Notice of Commencement with the Miami-Dade County Clerk of the Courts prior to the performance of any work. A recorded copy must be posted at the job site. If the homeowner does not file this notice, they may have to pay twice for improvements. The Notice of Commencement form may be obtained at the Pinecrest Building and Planning Department or online at www.pinecrest-fl.gov.

The Construction Lien Law (Chapter 713, Florida Statutes) allows a contractor, subcontractor, material supplier, or anyone providing construction or material services to your home or business, to place a lien against your property if they are not paid for services or supplies. You can protect yourself by asking your contractor for a statement that all material suppliers and subcontractors have been paid.

Before making the final payment, you should obtain all final inspections and approvals from the Village, in writing, and you should receive a Final Release of Lien from your contractor covering all contractors, subcontractors, laborers and suppliers. You may at any time contact the Pinecrest Building and Planning Department to determine what inspections have to be approved.

You are always home in Pinecrest!



Village of Pinecrest

Village Council

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Joseph M. Corradino, *Vice Mayor*

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A Consumer's Guide to choosing the Right Contractor



Your Choice... Your Project Learn and Get Informed

This brochure can help you make smart choices - and help you avoid an unlicensed contractor and paying twice for your improvements



Beware of Con Artists

There are many con artists that attempt to qualify themselves as licensed contractors. They usually make promises of quick and inexpensive repairs and require large up-front deposits. Be wary of contractors that may:

- Target the elderly, uninformed and the young and inexperienced.
- Focus on driveway paving, roofing and painting.
- Solicit door to door claiming to have “just finished a job down the street.”
- Arrive in unmarked vans or trucks, some from out of state.
- Have a post office box address with no street address, or give a local motel as their address.
- Promise to use your home as a “demonstration model” at a bargain price.
- Offer to work for you, only if you will obtain any necessary building permits.
- Ask for all the money up-front.
- Hurt themselves at your job site. They could sue you if they are not insured!



Narrowing the Field

Choose at least three different companies and always obtain a written estimate from each. The Contract should detail what you want done, specifying such items as the quality and type of materials. Have your adjuster or agent review the written estimates and verify the proper procedure you must follow to ensure payment of the claim.

Before Signing the Contract and Allowing any Work to Proceed...

- Read the contract carefully and fill in all blank spaces.
- Consult your insurance agent to see if the repairs are covered by your insurance.
- Have an attorney review the contract before you sign.
- Take every reasonable precaution to protect your interest.

Your Contract Should Include:

- The Contractor's name, address, telephone number and professional license number.
- Precise description of work to be completed and materials to be supplied.
- Any financing information that is required by law or that is part of the transaction.
- Receive in writing any warranty agreements and construction completion date.
- Make sure the job site will be clean thoroughly and that no debris will remain after the job is complete.
- Make sure your contractor applies for all necessary building permits and obtains inspections to ensure the work is up to Code.

How to find a Reliable Contractor

One of the first questions you should ask before hiring someone to do work for you is “Are you licensed and insured?” The



Florida Building Code recognizes licenses issued by the Miami-Dade County Construction Trades Qualifying Board and the State of Florida. Ask to see the contractor's license and proof of insurance before you consider entering into a contract. Check that the license you are shown matches the person showing it. Ask to see additional identification if you are not sure.

- Determine how long a contractor has been in business. You may wish to check with local building supply retailers. An established contractor with a reputation for using quality materials and paying his bills with his suppliers is more likely to do quality work for you.
- Verify qualifications by checking with the Department of Business and Professional Regulation at (800) 342-7940, or website www.myflorida.com/dbpr select “DBPR online services” and search for a license, Permit or Registration. Miami-Dade County Building and Code Compliance at (305) 468-5900, and the Pinecrest Building and Planning Department at (305) 234-2121.
- Ask for references of persons for whom the contractor has done work and CHECK THEM OUT.