

your home

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Tips and trends for homeowners, buyers and sellers



HANDY SCAM

Undertaking a home renovation is stressful, even with the best contractors. Unfortunately, not all are trustworthy and many homeowners are scammed.

In 2016, more than 32,000 scams were reported to the Better Business Bureau (BBB). On average, homeowners lost \$1,400 from shady contractors, painters and repairmen, according to the BBB.

1. Verify the contractor's license, insurance and at least three references. Make sure you ask for the contractor's license number upfront. With this information, you can verify the license with your state. Also, ask for at least three references. Even a scammer may have had a couple projects go well in the past, so getting many references reduces the likelihood you're dealing with one.
2. Ensure the contractor is an active member of a reputable industry organization. Vendors who are part of the National Association of the Remodeling Industry (NARI) and/or the National

Kitchen and Bath Association (NKBA) must undergo a certain level of scrutiny to join, plus they pledge to uphold a code of ethics. This also demonstrates a level of commitment to their business and the industry as a whole.

3. Check the contractor's reputation online. Even if you check a contractor out online, don't be satisfied with a quick Google search. Make sure you look for news articles, read reviews and ask neighbors on sites like Nextdoor.com. Also, search the name of the company, the address, the owner and any other employees you meet.

4 HOME CARE MISTAKES YOU DON'T EVEN KNOW YOU'RE MAKING

1. **Using glass cleaners on mirrors**
Spraying can lead to "black edge," when liquid seeps beneath the reflective backing and stains your mirror. Instead, use a lint-free microfiber cloth dampened with warm water.
2. **Using the wrong caulk** There are as many caulks as there are glues, and you wouldn't use a glue stick to fix broken pottery, according to HouseLogic. Similarly, you wouldn't use silicone caulk on bricks because it's made for non-porous surfaces. Check online or at a home improvement store to ensure you're using the right caulk.
3. **Over-mulching** Mulch is great for your home, but don't pile it on too thick. No more than 3 inches should do the trick. Otherwise, you may prevent water from reaching roots and suffocate plants.
4. **Piling firewood against your exterior wall** Firewood against the exterior wall of a house is an invitation for termites. Stack your wood at least 20 feet from your home.

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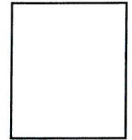
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PRE-LISTING checklist

➤ An efficient, well-managed move not only saves you time and money, but it also can make the transition to your new home easier and more pleasant for your family. Here are 10 proven tips to help make your move a trouble-free experience from start to finish:



Research your home online. Most buyers start their home search online, so know that information about your home is already out there before you officially list. Google your home and see what comes up, what it looks like and if it has an estimated value. Now is the time to fix any errors. You can contest estimated values you see on your home on sites like Zillow.



List every repair and improvement you made, no matter how small. Walk through your house and write down everything you can think of. Did you buy a new fridge? Install a new hot water heater? Rebuild your deck? Replace the roof? You also want to list any problems you have addressed, and then talk to a professional about what and how to disclose.



Note the obvious flaws. Maybe there's a ding in the wall from moving a piece of furniture. Or perhaps your landscaping needs a major refresh. Note the obvious, fixable problems that could affect the sale of your home in order to have an idea of what you'll need to do to get it market-ready. This information will also be helpful when speaking with a qualified REALTOR®.

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