



# NEWS RELEASE

## Home Builders Association of Fargo-Moorhead

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For Immediate Release

## HBA reminds consumers to use local, licensed contractors

**F-M Metro Area** – As summer construction season approaches, Home Builders Association of F-M offers resources to help members of the public choose a qualified contractor. In general, local contractors have a history working in the area, have built a list of references, and will be around to service warranties or problems that may arise with projects. Visit [www.hbafm.com](http://www.hbafm.com) for information on how to choose a contractor and for a checklist to use when interviewing someone to hire. The HBA website also has a directory of local contractors categorized by what they do.

“With our extraordinary weather and the additional energy efficiency incentives out there, it is more important than ever to make sure you are using a local, licensed contractor,” says Bryce Johnson, HBA of F-M executive vice president. “Out-of-town contractors come with every major storm or construction opportunity. While some of those companies are legitimate, sometimes they are not licensed and are difficult to track down if any future issues arise. Many times these outside contractors are just trying to make a quick buck and move on to the next place.”

### Top 10 consumer tips

1. *Always* check to see if the contractor you are considering, local *or* transient, is licensed in the state in which work will be performed. Contact the appropriate governmental agency: North Dakota Secretary of State’s office at (701) 328-3665 or the Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry at (651) 284-5034 or (651) 284-5069 to verify the builder is currently licensed and to find out if he or she has a disciplinary history. The status of a contractor’s license can also be verified by using the website <http://nd.gov/sos/licensing/> or [www.doli.state.mn.us/contractor.html](http://www.doli.state.mn.us/contractor.html).
2. To verify rebate or tax credit process and amounts, check with your local utility if you are interested in taking advantage of the North Dakota Utility Rebate program or other federal energy efficiency incentives.
3. Get more than one estimate and be wary of any contractor that requires full payment up front, uses high-pressure sales tactics or asks you to sign authorization paperwork or a contract that you don’t understand. Consider paying with a credit card since these companies have better methods of remedying disputes and dealing with fraudulent charges.
4. Get a detailed contract including a summary of the work to be done, a description of materials, the total contract price or how the price will be calculated and specific timelines. Do not sign it until you are comfortable.
5. Ask the contractor how long and where he or she has been in business.
6. Request references and check with former customers to see if they were satisfied with the work.
7. Ask for a local business address, other than a post office box, and a local phone number where the contractor can be reached during normal business hours. Some transient companies will open a post office box or can easily acquire a cell phone with a local number to give the appearance of being a local company, when it is not.
8. Ask about warranty work and the company’s service policies.
9. Find out if the contractor has sufficient workers compensation and general liability insurance. If not, you may be liable for any construction-related accidents on your premises.
10. Lastly, make sure you can communicate with the contractor and feel comfortable with him or her. Misunderstandings during the course of the project can lead to cost overruns and delays.

For more details visit [www.hbafm.com](http://www.hbafm.com) or call (701) 232-5846.

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For any questions regarding this release, please call Krista Mund at (701) 232-5846.