

GUIDANCE NOTES

Produced by

Tendring District Council
Building Control Service



Hiring a Builder

TIPS TO HELP YOU HIRE A BUILDER

If you are considering any work to your property, and you require a builder, you should consider this choice very carefully. As this is one of the biggest investments you are likely to make you should thoroughly check any builder out before employing their services.

Here are some things you should consider doing:

- For large projects consider employing a professional to advise you.
Addresses and contact numbers of professional organisations are on the back of this sheet
- Discuss the extent of your arrangement with your professional.
Does it involve the preparation of plans only, or is site supervision part of the package?
- If you consider your job so small you don't require a professional, then get advice from someone in the industry who you know and trust.
- Always obtain quotations (at least three) and have them checked. An estimate is a rough guide, a quotation is usually a fixed price. Check if it includes VAT.
- **Don't automatically go for the cheapest quote - you may pay more in the end!**
- Ask questions of the builder:
 - Try to get a personal recommendation or ask for references from previous clients.
 - What is their expertise in the particular project you intend to carry out.
- Do they want to be paid on completion or in stages. Don't pay for the work until it is completed to your satisfaction, but do expect to pay a deposit to cover the cost of materials.
- Get a time schedule and completion date in writing and state the standard of work required and on what basis either party should terminate the contact.
- Will they accept a penalty clause on failure to complete on time. A Building Contract for homeowners/occupiers can be obtained by telephoning 0121 722 8200 or by visiting www.cip-books.com. Currently, the cost is £9.95.
- Check what guarantees are being given. What does it cover, who is it underwritten by.
- Check that your contractor has public liability insurance.
- Be realistic about costs. Cut price jobs can be trouble.
- Be assertive - you are paying for the work. If you have a problem discuss it with the head of the company.
- If you are having major work done get an independent architect, surveyor or building engineer to supervise the project and to control costs.
- Finally, reassure yourself by checking out the builder's work, references and any other aspects like work habits, with previous clients

**Be Safe...Be Sure...
NOT SORRY!**

Further copies of this Guidance Note can be obtained free of charge from:
Building Control, at:

Tendring District Council
Council Offices
Thorpe Road
Weeley
Clacton on Sea
Essex
CO16 9AJ
Tel: 01255 686111

USEFUL ADDRESSES AND CONTACT NUMBERS

- ❖ **Chartered Institute of Building**
Tel: 01344 630700 Fax: 01344 630777
www.ciob.org.uk
- ❖ **Royal Institution of British Architects (RIBA)**
Tel: 0207 580 5533 Fax: 0207 255 1541
www.architecture.com
- ❖ **Chelmsford Chamber of Commerce**
Tel: 01245 241431
www.essexchambers.co.uk
- ❖ **National Federation of Builders**
Tel: 01223 438200 Fax: 01223 438201
nfbeat@builders.org.uk
- ❖ **House Builders Federation**
Tel: 01234 381110
hbf@hbf.co.uk
- ❖ **Department of the Environment, Local Government and the Regions**
Tel: 0207 944 5742 Fax: 0207 944 5739
www.construction.dtlr.gov.uk/bregs
- ❖ **Warranty Schemes**
Zurich New Home Warranty Certification
Tel: 01252 377474 Fax: 01252 372989
- ❖ **MasterBond Warranty (Renovations, Extensions & Home Improvements)**
Freephone 0800 965765
- ❖ **Trading Standards Division**
Tel: 0645 376060
tradingstandards@camcnty.gov.uk
- ❖ **National Consumer Council**
Tel: 0207 730 3469 Fax: 0207 730 0191
info@ncc.or.uk
- ❖ **Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS)**
Tel: 0207 222 7000 Fax: 0207 222 9430
www.ricsonline.org
- ❖ **Citizens Advice Bureau**
Tel: 08707510952
- ❖ **Publications**
'Avoid Cowboy Builders'
Construction Industry Publications
Tel: 0121 722 8200 Fax: 0121 722 8201
www.cip-books.com