

Why Hire a Licensed Building Trade Professional?

Tips by the Northern Minnesota Builders Association

The Northern Minnesota Builders Association is a non-profit membership based organization that supports the building industry in northern Minnesota. As part of the NMBA mission they provide education to consumers to help them in the process of hiring a building trade professional. The Northern Minnesota Builders Association has a consumer section on their website that can assist in home improvement or new construction projects with tips, links and resources that you can find at: www.nmbuilders.com.

Whether looking to do a small bathroom remodel or building a new home you should be aware of some facts in the state of MN regarding building industry professionals that are required to be licensed. Like many other industries (healthcare, dentistry, beauticians, realtors, etc) residential contractors, plumbers, electricians and power limited technicians are required to be licensed in the state of Minnesota. The MN state agency that is responsible for licensure and enforcement of these building trades is the Minnesota Department of Labor & Industry. You can find complete licensure information at the MN Department of Labor & Industry by logging onto their website: <http://www.dli.mn.gov> by clicking on the licensing link and then clicking on the building trade you are inquiring about. Or you can contact them to verify licensure, learn more about which building trades are required to be licensed at 1-800-342-5354. Licensure of any building trade professional can be found by typing in the name of the building trade professional, company name or license number at: <https://secure.doli.state.mn.us/licensing/licensing.aspx>.

The MN Department of Labor & Industry has published a document to also assist consumers in the process of hiring a residential contractor. You can download this document at: http://www.dli.mn.gov/CCLD/PDF/rbc_consumer_contractor.pdf and print it for future reference. This has good tips and resources.

Here are some of the Northern Minnesota Builders Association Top 7 Tips on why you should hire a licensed building trade professional:

- These companies are abiding by the MN State Statute rules to be registered with the MN Department of Labor & Industry: residential contractors (\$15,000+ gross per year), electricians, plumbers and power limited technicians (lawn sprinkler technicians, garage door technicians, low voltage technicians, data communication technicians). Each company must have at least one qualifying person who holds licensure for their industry type required by Minnesota statute. Each company pays a license fee every two years (MN Statute Section 326B).
- Each qualifying person must show proof of specified levels of liability insurance (determined by the MN statute) at each renewal period (MN Statute Section 326B.46).
- Each qualifying person must show proof of workers compensation for the company employees (MN Statute Section 176.182).
- Each qualifying person must take proper continuing education in a specified time period to renew their license by renewal date (MN Statute Section 326B). This is ensure that proper codes are followed for specified trade. Each building trade profession has specific code requirements that cover safety and well being of the public.
- Each licensed company pays by bond or recovery fund fee that covers resolution issues between consumers and building trade professional. Consumers that hire an unlicensed contractor do not have access to the contractor recovery fund.
- In accordance to the MN Statute (Section 327A) residential licensed contractors must provide a home warranty which provides a 1, 2 and 10 year warranty.
- Licensed building trade professionals have their work inspected in code adopted areas and are issued certificates of occupancy. In code and non-code adopted areas non-licensed building trade contractors cannot pull land use permits or building permits. Municipalities ask for proof of active building trade professional licensure on land use permits and building permits.

The Northern Minnesota Builders Association has a complete list of building trade professional members that are properly licensed (verified upon new members and at each renewal time period) who can help you with your building/remodeling or home improvement project. You can find them at: <http://www.nmbuilders.com/membership.html>.