



NEWS RELEASE

STATE EMERGENCY OPERATIONS CENTER

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Protect Yourself from Home Repair Scams After Flooding in the Upper Peninsula

LANSING, MICH. Consumers tackling home restorations after severe weather and flooding in Houghton and Menominee counties are urged to check the license status of contracted individuals and businesses online on the Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs' (LARA) website.

LARA's online resources provide consumers with current information on the status of a contractor's license and a historical record of the licensee.

Residential Builders and Maintenance and Alteration Contractors are licensed by the Bureau of Professional Licensing. Search these occupational licensed contractors by visiting [here](#) at or by calling 517-373-8068. Consumers can also click [here](#) to view actions taken by LARA against residential builders.

Electricians, plumbers and mechanical contractors are licensed by the Bureau of Construction Codes. Verify their license by visiting [here](#) or calling 517-241-9316.

Consumers are also reminded to:

- Ask the individual to show you his/her "pocket card," which will contain the license number.
- Ask for and verify references.
- Get at least three written estimates to include detailed job specifications on the materials, labor, timeline, and total charges for the work. Don't automatically choose the lowest bidder.
- Obtain a detailed written contract stating exactly what work will be done, the quality of the materials used, warranties, start and completion dates, total cost of the job, and a payment schedule.
- Never sign a contract with blank spaces. Know your cancellation rights.
- Protect yourself by asking the contractor, subcontractor, and suppliers for a completed and signed "waiver of lien" form. This may provide you additional protection should a subcontractor or material supplier place a lien on your home if the contractor doesn't pay the bills. This can happen even if you paid the contract in full.
- Make sure your contractor is insured and carries personal liability, worker's compensation, and property damage coverage. Ask for copies of current insurance certificates. If the contractor is not properly insured, you could be held liable for any injuries and damages that occur during the project.
- Check with your property insurance provider for the extent of your coverage.

- Avoid paying for the entire job upfront. Consider paying one-third in advance; one-third halfway through the job and the final payment upon satisfactory completion. Avoid paying with cash. Pay by check or credit card and get a receipt.
- Keep good records—copies of the contract, change orders, and correspondence.
- Don't forget your permit—if needed—by checking with your local or state building department. The proper permits and inspections help to guard against defective work or costly mistakes. If homeowners plan on doing the work themselves, they are also responsible for obtaining building permits.

LARA values and relies on complaints from consumers to spur investigations into licensed professionals who are potentially violating the Occupational Code. Every complaint received by the department is reviewed and analyzed by professional licensing staff.

For more information on filing a complaint with the department, visit Michigan.gov/BPL.

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The SEOC is the emergency operations center for the state of Michigan. Located in Lansing, the SEOC is overseen by the Michigan State Police, Emergency Management and Homeland Security Division and coordinates response and recovery efforts by state agencies and local government. The SEOC is staffed by members of state agencies for decision making and information coordination during disasters or emergencies in the state of Michigan.

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