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Department of Consumer Protection

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Each year residents in Westchester County spend thousands of dollars on remodeling their homes. When a problem arises, it is often the result of the homeowner not having chosen a reputable contractor. One way of minimizing risk is for residents to employ only County-licensed home improvement contractors. Unfortunately, many residents are unaware of the licensing requirement and whom it regulates.

Under the law, it is a misdemeanor for home improvement contractors doing business in the County (whether they live within or outside of Westchester) not to have a Westchester County license issued by our department. We have the authority to assess penalties up to \$1,000 per violation.

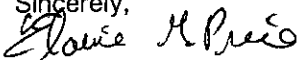
Our law protects the contractor as well. The courts in New York State have repeatedly held that an unlicensed contractor cannot sue a consumer in court for monies owed on a contract even if the unlicensed contractor did an outstanding job.

Pursuant to the Westchester County Consumer Code, the definition of home improvement is expansive. It includes: WATERPROOFING, EXTERIOR SIDING, AWNINGS, LEADERS AND GUTTERS, DECKS, PATIOS, GARAGE, CARPORTS AND ADDITIONAL ROOMS, STORM AND/OR REPLACEMENT WINDOWS AND DOORS, ROOFS, DRIVEWAYS AND WALKWAYS, KITCHENS AND BATHROOMS, MASONRY, FENCE INSTALLATIONS, CHIMNEY MAINTENANCE, EXTERIOR PAINTING, LANDSCAPING, (NOT SEASONAL AND ROUTINE MAINTENANCE) ARBORICULTURE, TILE SETTERS, SWIMMING POOLS, AND OTHER SIMILAR IMPROVEMENTS.

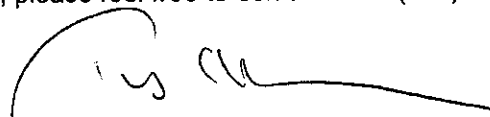
We would appreciate your continued assistance in protecting Westchester residents as well as contractors. As you are aware, one of the most effective ways to enforce our licensing law, is for the building department to issue building permits only to licensed home improvement contractors. Many consumers have been grateful that their local building inspector warned them that their potential contractor was not licensed. It also would be helpful if the building department would require all contractors to put their license numbers on building permit applications. It is now possible to check on-line to see if a particular contractor holds a current Westchester County Home Improvement License. This information can be obtained by going to the Westchester County web site at westchestergov.com/consumer. **We also have created a "Renegade Renovators" list on our website which we believe is self-explanatory!**

If you or any contractor in your municipality has any questions, please feel free to contact us at (914) 995-2215.

Sincerely,



Elaine M. Price
Director



Thomas Kramer
Senior Inspector, Licensing Division