

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Attorney General Janet T. Mills Urges Consumers to Be Careful When  
Choosing a Home Repair Contractor

"After storms and other natural disasters, some home improvement contractors aggressively market their services to the elderly and other potentially vulnerable consumers to repair their homes," said Attorney General Mills. "While most contractors in Maine are reputable and treat their customers fairly, some do not. Consumers should wait, check around and get written estimates before hiring a contractor do to home repairs."

Attorney General Mills recommends that people who are insured contact their insurance adjuster to get an estimate of the repair costs and use that number as a benchmark when getting estimates from and hiring a contractor.

Other steps consumers can take to protect themselves from unscrupulous operators are:

1. Shop around. Do not hire the first person you talk to, and get several estimates.
2. Do your own research. Check references from past customers, if possible, and inspect work the contractor has done in the past.
3. Get it in writing. Always use a contract. Maine law requires a written contract for home repair jobs that will cost more than \$3,000.
4. Shop local. If possible use a local business person. If you have a problem down the road, it will be easier to correct the problem if the contractor is in your community.
5. Take your time. If the offer is good today, it will be good tomorrow. Be skeptical of high pressure tactics. A reputable contractor will not pressure you to sign a contract. Take 24 hours to review it carefully.
6. Insist on a payment schedule. By doing so you give yourself some leverage. Maine law states that down payments cannot exceed 1/3 of the total cost of the job.
7. Get a second opinion. Have an independent inspector or insurance adjuster inspect the project before you make your final payments.

If you have questions about home construction repair or if you need to file a complaint please contact the Attorney General's Consumer Protection Division at (800) 436-2131 or by email at [consumer.mediation@maine.gov](mailto:consumer.mediation@maine.gov).

For more information on consumer issues please visit our website at: [http://www.maine.gov/ag/consumer/housing/home\\_construction.shtml](http://www.maine.gov/ag/consumer/housing/home_construction.shtml).

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