



# SCAM ALERT!

Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office  
Sheriff Larry Ashley



## Beware Contractor Con Artists

Contractor fraud continues to be a problem in our community; but if you do your homework you can prevent fraud. The Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office advises consumers to take the time to thoroughly check out contractors and use this checklist to ensure a safer contracting experience.

- Be wary of contractors contacting you door-to-door or by telephone, especially those offering **bargains, scare tactics, or immediate service.**
- Get at **least three bids** and don't necessarily choose the lowest bid. You'll probably get just what you paid for and you may not be happy.
- Do **not** do business with an unlicensed contractor. Check the contractor's license with your local building department and the Department of Business & Professional Regulations at <http://www.myfloridalicense.com/dbpr/> or call at 850-487-1395.
- Get a reliability report from the Better Business Bureau at [www.bbb.org](http://www.bbb.org) or call your local BBB.
- Insist on a **written contract that details the work** to be done and materials used, the start and completion dates.
- Pay nothing upfront, or the cost of materials as stated in the contract. **Do not pay in cash.** Pay by check and make sure it is documented on all paper work.
- Get and check at least three customer references.
- Pay in full only when 1) the job is complete 2) you're satisfied 3) you've received a "lien waiver" showing the contractor has paid sub contractors and suppliers and 4) an inspector has signed off on the job (if required .)

**CASE**  
partnership

To report a fraud or scam call the  
Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office  
Fraud & Scam Hotline at 850-651-7674