



To: Debra O'Connor
Re: *The curse of the contractor*, published 3/16/2008

Debra:

Your recent article, *The curse of the contractor*, has received great attention in our association. Many of our members are concerned about existing industry perceptions. Professional remodeling companies aim to distinguish themselves from examples of lesser companies.

Our organization is committed to increasing industry professionalism specifically to eliminate these problems. We take it seriously when any consumer is negatively impacted by a relationship with a remodeler. We never wish to see a homeowner in the position Tamme Kuehn is in. Of the 16,000 licensed contractors in the state of Minnesota, 400 contractors and industry-related companies are members of our organization. To help avoid problems, the National Association of the Remodeling Industry encourages consumers to do the following prior to selecting a contractor:

- Call the [Minnesota Department of Commerce](#) (651) 296-4026 to verify that the remodeler is licensed by the State of Minnesota. The license number should appear on all printed material supplied by the contractor.
- Find out whether the remodeler is a member in good standing with the [Better Business Bureau](#), and whether he or she is a member of NARI or another professional trade association.
- Request a list of recently completed projects. Make sure the remodeler provides you with a diverse portfolio, and doesn't merely specialize in one or two areas of remodeling. The remodeler should include at least two projects for consideration that are similar to your own.
- Take the time to interview potential remodelers rather than simply soliciting bids. The interview process will allow you to determine whether you and the remodeler communicate well, whether his or her bid reflects your needs and expectations, and whether the remodeler is an individual you will feel comfortable having in and around your home.

We also encourage all consumers to only work with remodeling companies that are part of a professional association wherein members voluntarily abide by a Code of Ethics.

Lastly, when going through the selection process, consumers need to ensure that they are not making the decision on price alone. If the price sounds too good to be true, a consumer should consider what may be absent as a result. Remodeling is an intimate experience. If done well, it will be a great experience for a family.

For these reasons, we strongly encourage consumers to do their homework before signing an agreement to remodel their home. We have seen people putting more time and research into making a \$30,000 vehicle purchase than a \$150,000 remodeling decision.

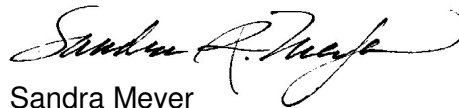
As Mr. Durenberger said, "It's up to the homeowner to find those hardworking, honest people. They need to take responsibility for carefully checking out whom they're hiring."

You made excellent points on the selection process in your article entitled *Finding a good contractor*. Consumers need to also understand a free, nonprofit resource exists to help locate a professional contractor in Minnesota. We encourage homeowners to use our search engine on www.narimn.org to find an appropriate partner to begin their remodeling projects. Our website also features a consumer side, which the public may browse to obtain information on the remodeling process. We wish for all homeowners, as well as our members, to have positive and successful remodeling experiences.

Respectfully,
On behalf of the National Association of the Remodeling Industry - MN Chapter,



Todd Polifka
2008 President, NARI MN



Sandra Meyer
Executive Director, NARI MN