



NEWS RELEASE

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Attorney General Jackley Warns of Contractor Scams Following Summer Storms

PIERRE, S.D. – Attorney General Marty Jackley is urging South Dakota residents to be vigilant of transient contractor scams following the severe weather the State has seen over the past couple of weeks.

“South Dakotans will want to quickly clean up and make repairs to damaged property,” said Jackley. “Whether you are working to fix damaged roofs, water damage in a basement, or hail dents we encourage consumers to take the extra time to evaluate and secure the right contractor to avoid becoming a victim of a scam.”

Here are a few suggestions when choosing professional contractors:

- Take the time to evaluate the bidder before contracting the job.
- Homeowners should look for a reliable contractor with a proven track record who readily offers credentials.
- Ask for references. Legitimate contractors should be more than willing to provide a list of satisfied customers to verify their work.
- Ask for a written estimate and a written contract.
- Ask for sales tax license.
- Keep a copy of the final, signed contract. Read this contract carefully before signing. This contract will usually be binding once you have both agreed to it. The contract should state that any changes in the project should include a Change Order signed by both and put guarantees in writing. Any guarantees made by the contractor should be written into the contract.
- Obtain a local building permit, if required.
- Make final payments only after the work is completed. Do not sign completion papers or make the final payment until the work is completed to your satisfaction.
- Pay by check. Avoid on-the-spot cash payments. The safest route is to write a check to the contracting company and not an individual.

If you have questions regarding price gouging or transient contractors contact the Attorney General’s Consumer Protection Division at 1-800-300-1986 or at consumerhelp@state.sd.us.

