

Summer 2004

— Learn About Your Home Improvement Contractor —

Jennifer Lappegaard, Attorney

It's home improvement season in Minnesota. Consumers should be aware that many home improvement contractors are required to be licensed by the Minnesota Department of Commerce, including residential building contractors, remodelers, roofers and manufactured home installers. Licensing helps to ensure that residential building contractors maintain certain standards of education and professional conduct. In addition, the Department of Commerce maintains a recovery fund to compensate consumers who have suffered damages as a result of a licensed contractor's deceptive practices, conversion of funds or failure to perform. However, if you want to take advantage of the safety net that the recovery fund offers to consumers, you must use a licensed contractor.

If you are considering a home improvement project, the Department of Commerce offers great tools online to check into the home improvement contractors that you may be considering for a project.



First of all, you can find out if a contractor you want to hire holds a valid license. In addition to licensing contractors and overseeing the recovery fund, the Department of Commerce also has the authority to take disciplinary action against a contractor's license in the event that the contractor has violated the law. On the Department of Commerce's website, you can find out if the Department of Commerce has taken any enforcement action against a contractor you may be considering. Further, if you have a complaint against a contractor, you can make that complaint to the Department of Commerce. I would recommend checking out the following website anytime you are looking to hire a residential contractor:

<http://www.state.mn.us/cgi-bin/portal/mn/jsp/content.do?subchannel=-536881755&id=-536881351&agency=Commerce>

Contractor Facts

- Licensed contractors must complete at least 7 hours of continuing education each year.
- Political subdivisions are barred from issuing building permits to unlicensed contractors who are required to be licensed under Minnesota law.
- The license number of a licensed contractor must be placed on all building permits and permit applications.
- The license number of a licensed contractor must appear in any advertising, including signs, vehicles, business cards, published display ads, and brochures.
- Contracts entered into by a licensed contractor must also include the contractor's license number.



Watson & Speight, P.A.
411 West Third St.,
Red Wing, MN 55066
Phone: (651)388-8805
Fax: (651)388-8807
www.watsonandspeight.com

PRST STD
US POSTAGE
PAID
RED WING, MN
PERMIT NO. 375

Organization

KENT W. SPEIGHT
*Chief Executive Officer
Attorney*

JENNIFER L. LAPPEGAARD
Associate Attorney

JAMES T. MCNARY
Associate Attorney

JAN M. SEBBY
Legal Consultant

KAY HALVORSEN
Legal Assistant

RUTH A. GOUDY
Legal Assistant

YVONNE M. RAASCH
Secretary

BARBARA J. JANISCH
Secretary
