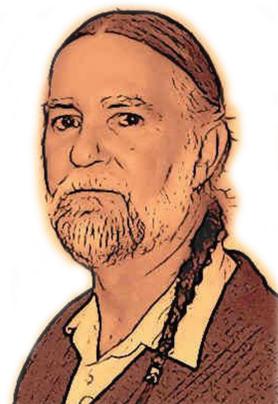


**SAFETY
TIP
No.1**

Dave Dahr on Safety



Hiring a Contractor

**HELPING
HOMEOWNERS**

AS A HOMEOWNER, AT ONE point you are going to need someone to assist you either in repairing your home or renovating it. When that time comes, you must take steps to protect your family and your home. This term is called “due diligence.” Doing your due diligence involves a wide range of steps including the delegation of your duties and

responsibilities as it pertains to the safety of those individuals who will work on your property and your family members who are present at the workplace. Your retail building suppliers, who provide you with in-house installers of their products, address these steps and protect you as a homeowner as well as their reputation. Safety Tip #1

does not cover all aspects of what a contract should be – it only points out what is missing in a contract. With that being said, here are some sources of information and useful tips on hiring a contractor: Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, The Handy Canadian, Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations. An internet search on “hiring a contractor” will turn up lots of information. Keep in mind that these sources do not address your safety issues or concerns.

Delegating Your Duties and Responsibilities

This is an important part of your contract because the person you delegate these responsibilities to will be acting on your behalf to ensure that all your safety concerns are addressed and implemented throughout the duration of your project. The person you delegate these responsibilities to must be a competent person.



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Who is a Competent Person?

A competent person is someone who has, in addition to having experience on how to do the work, received professional safety training specific to their task and also has knowledge of the OHSA and the internal responsibility system.

Identifying Safety Training

There are many professional safety training providers you can contact who can tell you what to look for after you describe to them what type of work you are having done. The person you are considering to hire should also be able to answer these questions.

An Independent Contractor or Employer

An independent contractor is someone who works by themselves and their responsibilities are limited to you and themselves. If they require additional help, then they are an employer and are responsible for their safety. Independent contractors are not required to carry WCB coverage, register their name with the province, have liability insurance and have a tax number. When none of these things are in place, you, the homeowner, could bear the cost of a workplace injury or fatality. Retail building suppliers recognize this and insist that their installers (independent contractors) get all of these things.

Professional or Handyman

A professional tradesperson is someone who has experience and maybe certified in a specific area of the construction industry and is focused on that specific trade. A handy person is someone who can carry out simple tasks but is not certified in any trade or have any knowledge of the safety precautions that may be required to carry out the task.

Insurance Policies

Liability insurance does not protect a homeowner from getting successfully sued for a workplace injury. Only by having the person you hire carrying WCB coverage gives you that peace of mind. This also applies to your own home liability insurance as well. There are limits on how much they will pay for an injury and you will pay the difference.

Your Contract

Make sure that the person you hire has done a hazard assessment and keeps a proper first aid kit on your project. They should have identified the safety controls and have them written in your contract. It is difficult to defend yourself on a handshake after something has gone wrong and someone has been hurt.



You can delegate your duties and responsibilities but you can never be removed from them.