



Hiring a Home Elevation Contractor

What You Should Know...

consumer *brief*

As New Jersey continues its post-Superstorm Sandy recovery and prepares to protect against future incidents of flooding, many consumers will seek to hire State-registered home elevation contractors.

REQUIREMENTS UNDER NEW JERSEY LAW

New Jersey's home elevation contractors statute (N.J.S.A. 56:1-138.2 et seq.) defines home elevation as raising an entire residential or noncommercial structure to a higher level above the ground. Contractors who offer home elevation services must, among other things:

- Have a named person in an ownership, employee, or consultant position who has a minimum of five years of experience in home elevation; and
- Maintain \$500,000 per occurrence of commercial general liability insurance required of all home improvement contractors, as well as a minimum of \$1 million per occurrence of cargo or other insurance that specifically covers damages or losses to the homeowner, lessee, tenant or other party resulting from home elevation activities; and
- Apply to the Division of Consumer Affairs for registration as a home elevation contractor, and receive from the Division a home elevation contractor registration number beginning "13HE"; and
- Provide the Division of Consumer Affairs with specific information about the company's street address, ownership, business type, and other information.

As of **October 1, 2014**, no person or business may solicit or perform home elevation work, without being registered as a **home elevation contractor** by the Division of Consumer Affairs and meeting the other requirements specified above.

However, if a New Jersey-registered home improvement contractor has entered into a contract with a consumer to perform home elevation services **before October 1, 2014**, the contractor will not be required to register with the Division as a home elevation contractor for the purpose of completing the contracted project – as long as the contractor maintains written proof that the consumer has been apprised of the requirements of the law, and that the consumer has knowingly elected to proceed under the terms of the contract. The contractor also should immediately contact the Division of Consumer Affairs to seek registration as a home elevation contractor.

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Consumers and contractors can find additional information about New Jersey's requirements for home elevation contractors at www.NJConsumerAffairs.gov/HIC/HomeElevation.htm. Consumers and contractors should check this website regularly for any updates to the requirements, especially before entering into a new contract.

ADVICE FOR CONSUMERS

When seeking to hire a home elevation contractor, consumers should:

- Review the full list of New Jersey's requirements for home elevation contractors at www.NJConsumerAffairs.gov/HIC/HomeElevation.htm. Consumers should check this website regularly for any updates to the requirements, especially before entering into a new contract.
- Contact the Division of Consumer Affairs at **888-656-6225** or **800-242-5846** to learn whether the contractor is registered to perform home elevation services, and to learn whether the company has been the subject of consumer complaints.
- Obtain a copy of the contractor's insurance policies, and contact the insurer to verify that the policies are still valid. The contractor must have \$500,000 per occurrence of general liability insurance and \$1 million per occurrence of cargo or other insurance to cover damages resulting from home elevation activities.
- Contact your own insurance provider to learn about any limits or conditions that may exist in

your homeowner's insurance policy with regard to home elevation.

- Ask for the names and contact information of references for whom the contractor has performed home elevation projects in the past. Contact those references to learn about their experience.
- Ask for details about the company's experience with home elevation projects. Learn whether the company has the necessary equipment to perform a home elevation, or whether it will need to rent or otherwise obtain the equipment.
- Make a site visit to see the company's working operations. If possible, visit the site of one of its past or current home elevation projects.
- Demand a detailed contract that specifies the project's scope, specific time frame, total cost, and other information. Under New Jersey law, contractors must provide a detailed, written contract for every home improvement project – including home elevation services – costing more than \$500.
- Review and follow the Division of Consumer Affairs' advice for hiring a home improvement contractor, which can be found at www.NJConsumerAffairs.gov/brief/improve.pdf.

DIVISION OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS

973-504-6200 ■ 800-242-5846 (toll free within New Jersey)

website: www.NJConsumerAffairs.gov



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