

Bubba or Fauntleroy?

How to Choose a Contractor!

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You've picked out a wonderful new manufactured home. Your dealer has given you a list of contractors who can install your home. Your neighbor has a friend whom he highly recommends. How do you choose? How can you tell who is a reliable, trustworthy workman and who might just empty your pocketbook—leaving you with a home that looks like something out of “Trailer Park Of Terror.” (Yes, an actual movie!)

It's not the contractor's appearance you need to be concerned with. Here are the critical items to consider:

WHAT HAS THE CONTRACTOR DONE?

Get a list of the contractor's most recent jobs. Make sure that he is setting the heavier, new manufactured homes. Check with the homeowners ask them what went right and what was frustrating. Attire alone cannot tell you what kind of a job the contractor will do. Look at the work. Is the home nicely detailed, a credit to its surroundings?

STATE CONTRACTOR'S BOARD

All contractors have to be licensed with the State of California. They have to have current liability and workmen's comp insurance. This, as well as any complaints against the contractor, will be listed with the State. For California, go to: http://www2.cslb.ca.gov/CSLB_LIBRARY/License+Request.asp

No matter how warm and fuzzy the contractor is, play it safe and look

up his or her license. If their liability insurance and workmen's comp is not current, and there is an accident, you could be held responsible.

THE CONTRACT

A contractor has the right to ask for a 10% deposit upon signing the contract. After that, a contractor is entitled to be paid upon the completion of construction.

The contract should list the items to be completed and the cost of each item. With the installation of a manufactured home, you need to get itemized prices from the contractor for a number of items. A very good list is provided at: <http://silvercrest.com/SoCal/ds/ds-cost2.html>

WHAT TO EXPECT FROM YOUR DEALER

When shopping at a manufactured home dealer for a new Manufactured home, the dealer usually doesn't mention other expenses, over and above the Home, Delivery and Set.

“Home Base Price” is the price for the factory to build the home. The base price does not include upgrades. The base price will include all dealer costs plus the Dealer's standard profit.

“Delivery” means the transport of the home from the factory to your lot.

“Set” means setting the home on pillars and piers, leveling the home and bolting it together.

“Closeup” is sometimes included

in the set price but can be separate. It means doing all the cosmetic work inside and outside the home to cover up the areas where the sections meet. It usually includes the skirting around the base of the home. Prior to signing the contract, be sure that there is a detailed, clear description of exactly what is included.

COMMON FRUSTRATIONS

The most common frustration is the job timeline.

Not the contractor's fault:

- **Weather Delays**
- **Building and Safety Inspection schedule.** The contractor can call for an inspection. The actual day and time of the inspection is at the discretion of the inspector, not the contractor.

The contractor's responsibility:

- **Communication.** If there is going to be an unforeseen delay, it is the contractor's responsibility to keep the homeowner informed.
- **Contractor diligence.** The contractor must watch his timeline and make sure that the crews are scheduled so that there is a minimum of delay between phases.

In the installation of a manufactured home, you will not see crews on your lot every single day. You do not want to pay for a crew waiting around for a prior phase to be completed. Therefore, a good contractor usually schedules the phases a couple of days apart.

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