

**Storm Damage? 10 Tips for Hiring a Home Repair Contractor**  
 Heavy rains over the last few days caused lots of flooding. If you have storm damage, the Better Business Bureau urges you to hire a local contractor with a history of doing business in this area. BBB also warns you to watch out for "storm chasers."

"One of the worst mistakes is to hire a storm chaser, a contractor who is working out of his pick-up truck, and going door-to-door soliciting business in storm-damaged areas," said BBB President Tom Bartholomy. "There are hundreds of local contractors in the Southern Piedmont area who specialize in water damage repairs, flood damage, mold remediation and more who will deliver quality work, on time and within budget."

Here are 10 tips for hiring a home repair contractor:

- Track record - Check out a company's BBB rating and complaint history at [www.bbb.org](http://www.bbb.org). It's fast, easy and free. You can also call the BBB at 1-877-317-7236, toll-free. Customer service operators are available, Monday through Friday, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.
- Cost comparisons - Get at least three bids in writing and be sure you compare the bids based on the same warranty, specifications, labor and time.
- Licensing - Check to see if the company you plan to hire has the proper licensing with your state's contractor's licensing board.
- Insurance - Verify the company's liability insurance to protect you against damage. You can also check with the department of insurance in your state.
- References - Ask for references from the company's last three jobs and check them out before you sign a contract.
- Written contract - Do not permit work to start without a signed, written contract that includes start and completion dates, exact costs, specific work to be done, and warranty information. Be sure to read the fine print carefully.
- Deposit required and payment - Do not pay more than 25 to 33 percent of the total job cost as a deposit. Final payment should not be due until the job is completed. Do not pay in cash; pay by check or credit card.
- Warranty - Get warranty information in writing on products and installation. Be sure to read the fine print carefully.
- Bonding - Be sure all workers are bonded to protect you against theft or additional damage.
- BBB Accredited Business - Find a contractor you can trust at [www.bbb.org/charlotte/accredited-business-directory](http://www.bbb.org/charlotte/accredited-business-directory).



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