

BE AWARE OF FRAUDULENT CONTRACTORS

Westlake is the youngest community in Florida and as such, there is not a long track record for contractors working in this City. As such many homeowners have been defrauded by contractors who seem to have done a good job at the neighbor's house. Always be vigilant and please call the building department for us to assist you in verifying contractors. Be wary of contractors that state *"you do not need a permit for that"*. Only the building Official can issue correct guidance as to permit requirements.

Bonafide contractors will always recommend getting permits and having their work reviewed.

- **Do not have a State issued license.**
- **Solicit door-to-door,**
- **Arrive in unmarked vehicles,**
- **Have a post office box or temporary address,**
- **Claim they are from another county or state and are in the area solely to help disaster victims, or**
- **Claim that they were doing work in the area and noticed that your home needed repairs.**

Protect Yourself from Service/Contractor Scams

Follow these tips to protect yourself:

- **Negotiate with your contractor to make partial/fractional payments based on stages/approved inspections as the work progresses. Do not make a full payment until you are satisfied that the work has been fully inspected and all suppliers and workers have been paid.**
- **Workers, sub-contactors and suppliers may place liens on your property even if you have paid your primary contractor. You may require a release of lien prior to making final payments.**
- **If your home is in need of repair, you should get at least three itemized estimates. Check each contractor's address, license and complaint history by calling the City of Westlake Building Department (561-530-5880 ext. 509).**
- **Never agree to a cash-only deal. Ask for a written estimate and inspect the terms carefully before signing and agreeing to any offer.**
- **Remember that honest contractors earn the majority of their business through referrals from satisfied customers. They don't have to travel door-to-door to find business.**
- **Ask contractors to justify their bids by listing the work/materials that are included. This allows you to make valid comparisons between estimates.**