

# Consumer Checklist

Web Site: [www.trustaquote.co.uk](http://www.trustaquote.co.uk)

*Each year Trading Standards receive over 100,000 complaints about builders and associated trades.*



Therefore, this checklist is provided for your use free of charge trust a quote and is intended to help guide you through the many pitfalls and help you avoid using non-competent tradespeople. We have over 20,000 vetted tradespeople and 75,000 customer reviews, so selecting a good local company is easy, simply click and choose your job and wait for three local tradespeople to quote.

## Before You Start

Always check your legal requirements, such as Planning Permission. You can find your local Planning Department via your local council website and on the navigation bar select consumer advice and click the Local Planning Requirements link. On the page, select the link called 'Find Your Planning Office'.

## Double Glazing?

From April 2002 all installations have fallen under Building Regulations and therefore need to be passed by a Building Inspector, or self-certified by a FENSA or Certass registered firm. You can check FENSA or Certass membership by telephoning them. A registered company will give you a certificate showing installation is compliant to the law.

## Electrical Works?

From 1<sup>st</sup> January 2005, most electrical works fall under changes to the Building Regulations known as Part 'P', and therefore need to be passed by a Building Inspector, or self-certified by an authorised company. A registered company will give you a certificate showing the work was carried out compliant to the law.

## Budget

Always add between 10-20% of the quoted price.

You may find that you encounter unforeseen problems or need to upgrade an item, or you may even have other ideas as the job progresses and request "extras".

At least this way you will not have any embarrassing breaks in the project if funds are not in place to cover such eventualities.

## Independent References

Never take contractor's letters of reference as proof of a good company – they may not be genuine. Always seek independent references from their Trade Association or ask to contact or visit at least two previous customers or jobs

## Insurance Certificate

Before work starts, always view the contractors current Public Liability insurance certificate. You must make sure you SEE the certificate (anyone can say they have it) and always check the expiry date.

## Play Safe – Use a Contract

Most trades-people and contractors should have a contract. It should be easy to understand. If you are in any doubt, we advise consumers to use their own JCT contract as, in the unlikely event of a dispute, it makes provision for the procedure of arbitration.

## Guarantee

Guarantees offered by contractors are adequate as long as the company is around to honour it when you need it – and if the company is credible enough to honour its commitment. For peace of mind, always insist on an **Insurance Backed** guarantee.

This way should the contractor become insolvent or is unable to complete the works, your project (and deposit – if deposit protection is included) is covered.

## Communication

If you encounter changes or alterations to the work you are having done then make sure you only deal with the owner of the business you are using.

Agreeing changes with the employees or sub-contractors can lead to unspecified extra cost and confusion.

IMPORTANT: make sure any changes are detailed in writing, including any additional charges, and are signed by both you and the contractor.

## Cash

Never give cash (or if you have to then insist on an official receipt) as many court proceedings are lost as a result of non-evidence of payment. Always pay by cheque, credit/debit card or get a signed receipt.