

Press release from Jan de Beer, cell 082 456 3677:

Check Experience When Selecting Your Builder, Mba North Warns

Advertisements in newspapers and eye-catching posters on street poles do not necessarily endorse a building service provider's credibility and trustworthiness, Palesa Khambi, Marketing Manager of Master Builders Association (MBA) North, has warned.

Khambi was commenting on increasing complaints in the press and on internet consumer forums, about building contractors who abandon projects after having received large sums of money in advance on home improvement projects.

"There appears to be a perception that all professional public advertising – such as attractive posters on suburban street poles - emanate from service providers who are professional and can be trusted with money paid upfront for building projects. Work is then often summarily awarded to such a contractor without checking his or her credentials, professional affiliation such as MBA membership, or work done in the past," Khambi states.

"Before signing a contract, samples of the contractor's work should be requested. In the case of a face brick house, for example, a panel of one square metre should be built and left on site as a benchmark for the duration of the contract. The plasterer should be asked to plaster a wall where a window will be installed so that his or her finishes to corners and flat surfaces can be assessed. In fact, the principle of requesting samples of workmanship and products should be applied to all trades involved in a building contract."

Khambi says the contractor should furthermore be able to supply at least three or more references to contact to assess professionalism. "You must also be able to reach the contractor by phone. Smaller operators – although experienced and capable – may not always have full-time staff in an office but as long as they can at least be reached by cell phone, technology should make up for short delays. But it's easy to change cell phone numbers these days so, for smaller operators, it is perhaps wise to also obtain their home address – and take a drive there personally to verify it."

The property owner must also establish if the builder has the necessary construction staff and equipment to handle the project – and if he or she is prepared to sign a contract acceptable to both parties. Such standard contract forms are available from any MBA office countrywide.

"It should be remembered that the lowest quotation does not happen purely by chance. However, it also does not mean that the lowest tender always comes from the least capable or a disreputable contractor. But when there are substantial differences between the lowest and second-lowest quotation, it is time to dig deeper and seek advice from an

experienced party or body in the building industry. Advice and standard documentation in this regard are available from MBA North,” Khambi adds.

MBA North can be contacted on tel 011 805 6611 or visit the association’s website on www.mbanorth.co.za

Caption:

When a contractor laying a concrete floor lacks experience, the floor will look great for a few months - but then the cracks will start appearing. It is essential to fully assess the capabilities of building service providers before awarding work, MBA North has warned.

Ends

Issued for MBA North, Midrand / Further info: Palesa Khambi, tel 011 805 6611 / www.mbanorth.co.za