

Criteria for assessing trades and service people



As part of Council's 2013-2018 Positive Ageing Strategy Action Plan, Nillumbik Shire Council has developed this criteria to help you assess trustworthy and reputable property maintenance and home modification businesses and services.

Who has to be registered or licensed?

- Demolition, re-stumping, re-blocking and any structural work to a building must be done by registered building practitioners with the Victorian Building Authority (VBA).
- Plumbers, gasfitters and drainers must be registered or licensed with the VBA to perform plumbing work. They must also carry an identification card from the authority and provide you with a compliance certificate for work over \$750, or for gas fitting or work to below-ground sewer drains regardless of the value of the work.
- Electricians must be licensed with Energy Safe Australia and issue you with certificates of electrical safety for all work done on domestic premises and carry an identification card with license details.
- For tree work being carried out on the ground, a minimum of one person must hold the qualification of Certificate II Horticulture

(Arboriculture) and all tree climbing work supervised and/or undertaken by a person with a minimum Certificate III Horticulture (Arboriculture).

- If tree work is being carried out within three (3) metres of any powerline, the person carrying out the work must be accredited and have completed recognised course training and provide evidence of accreditation.

Choosing a supplier or contractor

- Decide exactly what you want and describe it in detail, right down to the make and model of any fittings and provide photos if possible.
- Contact Council to find out if the work will require permits. As the home owner, it is your responsibility to make sure planning and building permits are obtained for all works. Contact Council on 9433 3111.
- Get at least three quotes on the same detailed description of the job.

- Understand exactly what the quotes cover, as the cheapest may not include some items or may only give a base rate that does not cover the cost of the actual materials and finishes you want.
- Check the person's details by asking for their
 - o Full name (not just first)
 - o Physical address (not PO box)
 - o Registered business name
 - o License and/or registration details (if their trade is licensed or they are a registered building practitioner)
- Ask to see a current certificate of currency for public liability insurance (no more than 12 months old) which protects you or third parties against any damage workers may cause.
- It is essential to maintain good communication with your tradesperson or service provider throughout the work, so choose someone you can work well with.
- If possible check references and inspect work they have done. Questions to ask referees include:
 - o Did the person start and finish on time?
 - o Were they able to communicate regularly and clearly about changes or quality of work?
 - o Did the price increase? Was this reasonable and agreed to?
 - o Were they satisfied with the quality, price and timeline of the work?

You do not have to use a registered building practitioner for work that involves:

- Plastering
- Tiling (including wall and floor)
- Glazing
- Installing floor coverings
- Insulating
- Painting
- Attaching external fixtures like awnings, security screens, insect screens, balustrades
- Erecting a mast, pole, antenna, aerial or similar structure

For these tradespeople reference checks and/or personal recommendations are particularly helpful, as well as checking personal and business details as you would for registered providers.

Deposits and other payments

- Never pay the full amount up front
- Only make progress payments or a final payment when you are satisfied all work outlined in the contract and/or agreement has been completed and free of defects.

Note: Be wary of people who knock on your door or telephone you unexpectedly, offering cheap or 'today only' deals on jobs as they may be fraudulent. If you can, go through the checklist provided here. If you are in doubt remember you can always say no, and record their details to report to the authorities.

For more information and/or to report a suspicious or threatening tradesperson or service provider contact:

- **Australian Competition and Consumer Commission**
www.accc.gov.au
1300 302 502
- **Consumer Affairs Victoria**
www.consumer.vic.gov.au
1300 558 181
- **Crimestoppers**
<https://crimestoppers.com.au/>
1800 333 000
- **Do Not Knock**
<http://donotknock.org.au>
campaigns@consumeraction.org.au
- **Scamwatch**
www.scamwatch.gov.au
1300 795 995
- **Stop Travelling Con Men**
www.stoptravellingconmen.org

This document has been compiled using information from Consumer Affairs Victoria and Arboriculture Australia.