

GUIDELINES FOR CONSUMER ADVICE TO GIVE WHEN DEALING WITH THE MEDIA

When responding to media inquiries – during National Home Remodeling Month promotion and throughout the year – it is important to remember that each contact with the press is an opportunity to work toward reversing public misperceptions about the remodeling industry. With unethical contractors as one of the largest sources of complaints registered with the Better Business Bureau and negative stories about unscrupulous contractors an all-too-prevalent reality, contact with the media is an occasion on which to issue a gentle reminder that a few bad apples are attempting to spoil the bunch.

When you get a call from your local television station or newspaper, you can remind the public that the remodeling industry boasts professional, ethical remodelers. How? By answering the most often-heard question, and telling the media how consumers can find reputable remodelers.

Remember that when you're talking to the media, you're talking to consumers. Acknowledge up front that there are a few unscrupulous contractors who get all the attention. Give advice on finding a qualified remodeler, such as:

- **Investigate the reputation and experience** of the remodeler.
- **Seek referrals** from friends, family, neighbors and co-workers who have had remodeling work done.
- **Check with the local Remodelers Council or builders association** for names of remodeler members. Membership with NAHB Remodelers indicates a remodeler's commitment to professional customer service and quality construction. A searchable database of remodeler members is available online at www.nahb.org/remodelers.
- **Use the resources online from NAHB Remodelers** at www.nahb.org/remodelers. The site includes interview questions for hiring a remodeler, plus qualifications to check and other tips for consumers.
- **Check with your local or state consumer protection agency or Better Business Bureau** to find out if any *unresolved* complaints have been filed against the remodeler
- **Check with the state licensing agency or local building inspectors** to verify that the remodeler has the appropriate license (if required) and a clean record.
- **Request copies of the remodeler's insurance certificates** to verify that he or she carries insurance that protects you from claims arising from property damage or job site injuries.
- **Don't compare apples to oranges** – when evaluating bids from contractors, make sure they are based on identical project specifications.
- **Be wary of a contractor who asks for a full payment** before the job has begun -- a payment schedule should be part of your written agreement - and may be tied to benchmarks such as completing various phases of the job.