



If it's too good to be true, then it probably is



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I recently read an online article about yet another tragic situation of a woman who had been left hanging by an alleged unscrupulous renovation firm somewhere in Ontario. Turns out, their house had been stripped bare to the bones and then no sight of the contractor after that. Now winter is upon them without insulated walls in their house and limited heat and water.

Nothing burns me more when I hear these stories, of which there are far too many and, as industry professionals, it makes it worse for us as the reputation of legitimate contractors takes a beating every time this comes up. There is no reason this should happen, but upon reading further there were certainly some red flags that, if they had been acted upon, the whole situation may have been avoided.

This person had been looking for a full home renovation with addition, with what turned out to be a "too good to be true price." This should be a flag to everyone not to get caught in this trap because it sounds good. So, I thought I would point out some of the "too good to be true flags" you should look for to avoid this situation yourselves.

1. As stated, if the price is way low for the work you want done, especially if you have two other prices that are much higher, it's likely too good to be true.
2. If they say they can get your building permit ready in a couple of weeks, it's too good to be true.

3. If they say your home renovation can be done in a few weeks and the scope of work is large, it's for sure too good to be true.
4. "We can start this week," usually too good to be true. If they are that available there's probably a reason why!
5. "I can do everything myself, so we won't need to hire sub-trades," is definitely too good to be true. Separate licenses and permits are needed for specialty trades like plumbing and electrical.

I'm limited in the size of this column, but these are certainly some of the main indicators to watch for with "too good to be true" contractors.

Good luck and very best wishes for you and your families for the Christmas Season!

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