

Since the 30th January 2006 a government endorsed scheme TrustMark has existed. This nationwide initiative is aimed at providing householders with a reliable source of professional tradesman to carry out work on their homes. It is in the form of a register of builders and other traders who can carry out domestic maintenance, repair and improvement work. All builders and traders are assessed by the scheme operator for their technical skills, trading records and financial position.

The firm will have signed up to a code of practice, which includes insurance, good health and safety practices and customer care. Details may be obtained from [www.trustmark.org.uk](http://www.trustmark.org.uk) or telephone **0845 300 80 40**.

# Your Local Building Control Service

**The Building Control Service is here to help, if you are in any doubt over Building Regulation requirements or require further information, please telephone or call at your local Building Control Office.**

Whilst every care has been taken in compiling this information leaflet and the statements contained herein the publishers and promoters cannot accept responsibility for any inaccuracies. Building Regulations are changed from time to time, if you did not receive this leaflet directly from your Local Building Control Authority, check with them that the information here is still current.

For further advice on this subject or any other Building Control matter please contact your Local Authority office as detailed below.

**Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council**  
01254 585747  
**Blackpool Borough Council**  
01253 476219  
**Burnley Borough Council**  
01282 477207  
**Chorley Borough Council**  
01257 515241  
**Fylde Borough Council**  
01253 658658  
**Hyndburn Borough Council**  
01254 388111  
**Lancaster City Council**  
01524 582369

**Borough of Pendle**  
01282 661722  
**Preston City Council**  
01772 906574  
**Borough of Rossendale**  
01706 252521/2  
**South Ribble Borough Council**  
01772 625521  
**Ribble Valley Borough Council**  
01200 425111  
**West Lancashire District Council**  
01695 585136  
**Borough of Wyre**  
01253 887251

*Leaflet design and artwork [www.stuartraith.me.uk](http://www.stuartraith.me.uk) Tel 01254 887304.*

## BUILDING REGULATIONS Information Leaflet No.7



# You And Your Builder

**LOCAL AUTHORITY  
BUILDING CONTROL  
Lancashire**

## YOU AND YOUR BUILDER

We have all heard of the legendary stories of cowboy builders. Three day jobs that took months to complete; extensions left half built. The Office of Fair Trading gets over 100,000 complaints every year regarding building work. Because of fears of poor workmanship or being ripped off, many of us are ignoring necessary repairs to the tune of £4bn.

If you need a job done that is beyond your own DIY skills and you have to employ a builder how can you ensure that the job is carried out properly and meets your expectations?

For work such as extensions and loft conversions it is worth considering employing an architect or surveyor to deal with aspects of design and also planning permission and building regulations. They may also give advice on finding the right contractor and oversee the work until satisfactory completion.

If you don't feel that the work is large enough to need professional advice, there are some straightforward guidelines to aid you in finding a competent builder who will carry out the work to your requirements at a competitive price.

**DO** shop around and obtain two, but preferably three quotes. If it is at all possible go on personal recommendation but always check the work has been completed satisfactorily. You could also contact reputable local firms and ask them to supply references, which you should follow up. Go and look at their work.

### Don't forget, always ask:

- **was the work completed on time?**
- **were there any unexpected costs?**
- **were the builders punctual and tidy**

**DO** ask questions. Make sure you know the answers to these questions.

- **do the builders have the right experience?**
- **will they agree to staged payments (only for work completed satisfactorily), with the final payment being paid only after the work is finished properly?**
- **will they itemise the invoice to enable you to see exactly what you are paying for?**
- **will they accept a penalty clause for failure to complete the work on time?**
- **will they agree to independent arbitration in the event of a dispute?**

Make sure you get the answers to these questions in writing.

## FURTHER DO'S AND DON'TS

**DO** use a builder who is a member of a trade association, for instance the Federation of Master Builders or the Construction Employers Federation. Yellow Pages have a list of relevant organisations, which can provide a list of members in your area. Don't just take the builders word for it if they say they are members, check their credentials with the organisation concerned who will be happy to confirm if someone is one of their members.

**DO** obtain specifications and quotes in writing to enable you to see in advance exactly what is to be done, how and what you are paying for. Compare paperwork from different companies to ensure you are being quoted like for like.

**DO** use a written contract and agree a completion date. The Federation of Master Builders provides a contract for use by its members, which sets out the work in easy to follow terms. The JCT Building

Contract for Home Owners/Occupiers and Contract for Home Repairs and Maintenance is suitable for smaller building projects and can be obtained for less than £10.00

**DO** ensure that your builder/electrical contractor is aware of the need to certify the electrical installation.

**DON'T** accept the cheapest quote. Good builders are hard to find and are in constant demand. They may therefore charge more than the competition. Don't settle for second best. If you have to pay for shoddy workmanship to be put right it could cost you more in the long term. Checking the company's credentials, taking up references and making sure you are satisfied that the work will be carried out to a high standard will ensure peace of mind which is worth paying for.

**DON'T** pay the builder in full until the Local Authority are satisfied that the work complies with the Building Regulations and have issued a completion certificate (applicable where work is subject to Building Regulation control)

**DON'T** pay cash for a 'cheap deal'; never pay for work in advance. It is unlikely that you would get your money back in the event of a problem. A deposit can be negotiated to cover the cost of materials if you are happy with this arrangement. Beware of anyone offering to do the work VAT free; (materials are always vatatable at the point of sale) they could be a rogue trader.

**DON'T** do business with anyone knocking on your door who tells you they are working in the area and have noticed that your roof, driveway or guttering etc., needs urgent attention. They are unlikely to be genuine. Always ask for a full name and address (a phone number is never enough).