

Don't be a victim of contractor fraud

With March being Fraud Prevention Month, The City of Calgary would like to remind citizens of a service that can help protect them against contractor fraud.

Contractors are required to hold a valid City of Calgary business license. Before hiring a contractor, citizens can call 3-1-1 to confirm that the contractor holds a valid business license.

In order to qualify for a business license, contractors must meet minimum standards, including the condition for a police background check. As well, a business license can be suspended or revoked, which is a strong incentive for contractors to operate with integrity.

“While the vast majority of contractors are legitimate business people, there are those that take advantage by promising services or products they can't – or won't – deliver,” says Marc Halat, manager of Business License & Livery Transport Services. “Making the call to 3-1-1 will reduce the level of risk homeowners take when they hire a contractor and will reduce the possibility of becoming a victim of fraudulent operations.”

Before hiring a contractor, Calgarians are advised to obtain the exact business or trade name, the owner's name and the business address and phone number. Then, call 3-1-1 to confirm that the business is licensed. For those contractors that don't hold a valid license, a complaint will be initiated and turned over to Business License Inspectors for investigation.

If a fraud does occur, The City advises Calgarians to report it to the Calgary Police Service at 403-266-1234.