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- Online
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- Web Exclusive
- Flooring Insider
- Tile Blogs
- Current Issue
- Cover Story
- Features
- Columns
- Industry News
- Products
- Resources
- Product Info (Free)
- Archives
- Digital Edition
- Archive
- eNews Archive
- Gold Book
- Buyers Guide
- Radiant
- Flooring Guide
- Calendar of Events
- Market
- Research
- Industry Links
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- Classifieds
- Career Center
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Avoid Poor Installations by Hiring Quality Contractors

by Bart Bettiga
September 22, 2008

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Tile Troubleshooting



Extremely low prices on tile installation labor should be thoroughly researched.

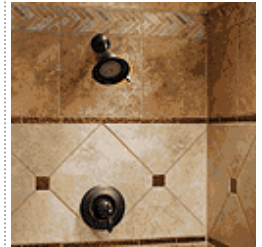
Three years after Hurricane Katrina devastated the Gulf Coast, complaints about contractors continue to give the construction industry a bad name. I recently read an Associated Press report on the recovery process, and some of the data detailed in the story was alarming, to say the least.

- Over 3,000 federally issued trailers still sit outside homes waiting to be rebuilt or restored in the New Orleans area.
- It is estimated that in the state of Louisiana, for every licensed contractor, there are five who are unlicensed.
- The Attorney General's office reported that prior to Hurricane Katrina, they received an average of 45 contractor complaints a year. In the last two years, since hurricane victims started receiving insurance settlements and hired contractors, they have received more than 6,000 complaints, with over 500 being classified as criminal.
- In Mississippi, the problems are similar, if not as numerous.

These are just the minimum conditions you should look for. If a price appears drastically lower than other contractors, I would strongly caution you to conduct more research. Something could have been missed in the bid process, or the company may have other issues.



Installation failures can often be avoided by hiring a reputable tile contracting company with a proven track record of success.



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In the past year, the NTCA has taken two significant strides to help differentiate quality contractors from questionable ones.

First, we have partnered with other leading tile associations to support the Ceramic Tile Education Foundation (CTEF — www.tilecareer.com) to develop and promote a quality certification program in the United States. This will take years to completely develop and implement. However, it is a vital step towards raising the level of quality of tile installation, and instilling trust in our industry for the consumer. Contracting companies who do quality work could realize a significant marketing and business benefit by certifying their employees in this program. Call the CTEF to discuss this highly valuable and important program.

The CTEF certification program can identify quality installers of ceramic tile. The NTCA has gone beyond that in our membership, by developing and implementing our Five Star Contractor Program (www.tile-assn.com). This allows the contracting company to be recognized as a quality organization that adheres to a strict set of criteria. Architects, designers, retailers, builders, and consumers who hire an NTCA Five Star Contractor can be certain they are hiring a company that can be trusted for both integrity and quality of an installation.

There is beautiful craftsmanship and quality work being done all over the country. It is the exception rather than the rule when an installation fails. However, it is our duty to try to minimize failures as much as possible. Specifying or hiring a quality, reputable contractor is the best way to eliminate potential problems.

Bart Bettiga

Bart Bettiga is the Executive Director of the National Tile Contractors Association. Established in 1947, the NTCA is dedicated to providing education for the proper installation of tile and its allied products to the ceramic tile industry. More information on the NTCA is available on-line at www.tile-assn.com.

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Quality installations can be expected when hiring qualified contractors like NTCA Five Star Member FD Berardino of Detroit, MI.