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## **COUNTY ATTORNEY ISSUES WARNING TO EL PASO RESIDENTS ABOUT POSSIBLE ROOFING CONTRACTOR SCAMS**

Stormy weather as the one El Paso is experiencing now can produce a big demand for roofing contractors. It is also a great breeding ground for “storm chasers,” fly-by-night roofing contractors who sometimes go door-to-door offering their services enticing residents with incredibly low estimates or offering new roofs paid entirely by the insurance company.

El Paso County Attorney Jo Anne Bernal has some recommendations for residents who are having problems with their roofs and are in need of hiring a contractor to fix their leaks:

- Hire only licensed or bonded contractors. They might be more expensive, but are the only ones who can offer you some peace of mind in case you are not happy with the repairs.
- Do not be rushed into signing any contract, especially if the contractor uses high-pressure sales tactics, such as today-only discounts.
- Always sign a detailed contract for the project, and get the terms and any warranties in writing.
- Before deciding to hire a contractor, do your homework. Get more than one estimate; ask for references from the companies, and search online for any complaint filed against the company or the individual, particularly with the El Paso Better Business Bureau (<http://www.bbb.org/elpaso/>). You can also call the El Paso County Attorney’s Office at (915) 546-2050 to find out about any pending or previous criminal cases involving a particular contractor.
- Never make full payment of the project upfront. A reputable legitimate home improvement company will NEVER ask for full payment upfront. However there are

times when it's industry standard for the homeowner to make a 50% deposit depending on the project, price and/or special order of the materials.

- Check with the City of El Paso to determine whether a city permit is needed for the roofing project. If one is required, ask the contractor obtain the permit. This will ensure he is bonded and insured.

“Most established roofing companies are trustworthy and professional. Consumers should be wary of an offer that sounds too good to be true – it probably is,” said El Paso County Attorney Jo Anne Bernal.

Any resident who feels has been the victim of a scam is asked to file a complaint with the El Paso Police Department at (915) 832-4436 or the El Paso Sheriff's Office at (915) 546-2280. For more information, please call the Criminal Unit of the El Paso County Attorney's Office at (915) 546-2050.

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