



# Eight steps to quality workmanship

*When you have work done in your home or on your property it can cost a lot of money, so it's important to protect yourself from unsatisfactory workmanship.*

Your idea of what is 'good quality' workmanship may be different from someone else's. When hiring someone for jobs such as carpet cleaning, flooring, tree trimming, garage door installation, brick paving, house painting, roof repairs, or air-conditioning installation, good communication and thorough research are key to being satisfied with the end result.

When you pay for a service you are entitled to a number of consumer guarantees offered by the Australian Consumer Law (ACL). If the service is not delivered with adequate care and skill, does not fit the purpose or give the results that you and the business had agreed to, or is not delivered by the date agreed or within a reasonable time where there is no fixed date, you are entitled to a remedy.

The following eight steps will help you to avoid faulty and unsatisfactory workmanship, and maximise your chances of a good outcome.

## 1. Communicate your expectations

It's important to be as specific as possible about what you expect about the work being carried out and the end result you are aiming for. If you can find photos of what you want, supply them to the tradesperson – often photos can be more specific than words. Be very clear about your expectations on time frames, materials to be used, and the processes involved. Discuss aspects such as the cleaning up and rubbish removal as well. Where possible get your questions answered in writing, but if you can't, keep your own notes on what has been agreed. Remember that for the ACL guarantee that something is 'fit for purpose', you need to make the purpose known to the business.

## 2. Speak to people you know and trust

Ask friends and family if they have had any similar work done and had a positive experience. It is preferable to use a company that is recommended by friends or family so take their advice from any research they have completed.

## 3. Research the company

It is worth spending some time researching the business you're considering using to check it is a legitimate company. Check they are in the telephone book, see if they have a website and search online for their business registration and details with the Australian Business Register at [www.abr.business.gov.au](http://www.abr.business.gov.au). A general online search will tell you if they have had any adverse publicity and you can also check consumer alerts or reviews.

## 4. Check for current licences

Make sure any tradesperson you hire has a current licence and appropriate insurance cover. The Building Commission can let you know if a plumber, builder or painter is licensed (contact details at the end of this fact sheet) or you can search online at:

[www.commerce.wa.gov.au/building-commission/find-registered-building-service-provider](http://www.commerce.wa.gov.au/building-commission/find-registered-building-service-provider)

It's important to ask for references from other clients who have had similar work done in your area.

## 5. Look into the claims made

All claims being made should be able to be substantiated. This includes environmental claims such as 'sustainable' and 'recycled' as well as claims about the quality/manufacture/source of materials being used.

It's also important to find out if the person making the promises is the same person who is actually going to do the work. Ask if any work will be subcontracted out and if so, get the name and details of the subcontractor so you can check them out and know who will be working on your property.

## 6. Compare prices

Ensure you are getting a good deal by getting at least three written and itemised quotes, and don't accept rough estimates. Ensure all work discussed is included in the quotes.

## 7. Keep all relevant documentation

Keep copies of all relevant documents, including itemised bills stating the ABN and company name, variations to quotes, signed contracts and receipts. It may also be beneficial to take photos before, during and after the work.

## 8. Seek advice when things go wrong

If you are unhappy with the quality of workmanship provided, and the initial response from the company or tradesperson is unsatisfactory, find out where you stand before going back to them. Consumer Protection provides a free service and can advise you on your rights under the law and how to make a formal complaint.

### For further information:

Building Commission  
Phone: 1300 48 90 99  
Email: [bcinfo@commerce.wa.gov.au](mailto:bcinfo@commerce.wa.gov.au)

**[www.commerce.wa.gov.au/building-commission](http://www.commerce.wa.gov.au/building-commission)**

Australian Building Codes Board produces and maintains the Building Code of Australia and the Australian Standards.

**[www.abcb.gov.au](http://www.abcb.gov.au)**

Business names search  
Australian Securities and Investment Commission

**[www.asic.gov.au/business-names](http://www.asic.gov.au/business-names)**

National Relay Service: 13 36 77  
Quality of service feedback line: 1800 30 40 59  
Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS) 131 450

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### Regional Offices

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