

## Don't automatically go for the cheapest quote

### Other factors you may need to consider:-

- Insurance, in case anyone you are employing is injured?
- Is VAT recoverable? – contact H M Customs & Excise: 0845 0109000
- Are you liable for the builder's tax? – contact your local Inland Revenue Office
- Do the Construction Design & Management (CDM) regulations apply? – contact the Health & Safety Executive: (028) 9024 3249

### TRADE ASSOCIATIONS AND PROFESSIONAL BODIES

A comprehensive list of Trade Associations and Professional bodies is available at the back of the Yellow Pages. The list includes contact numbers for professional bodies that cover types of work varying from plastering to plumbing, electricians to flooring and from Architects to Builders themselves. From the relevant associations and professional bodies lists of registered Architects or tradesmen can be obtained for:-

- a particular area (e.g. Northern Ireland), or,
- the type of work that is to be carried out (e.g. extension, renovation, etc.).

Advice can also be obtained as to how to go about organising your particular project in such a way that you will not be affected by Cowboy Builders and you will get good quality and value for your money.

#### Building Control

For further information and advice contact the Building Control department at your local Council offices. Please ask if you would like this information in large print, Braille, another language, or on audio tape.

# Building Control Avoiding "Cowboy Builders"



## The Government has recently produced a paper on "combating Cowboy Builders"

In 1996 the Office of Fair Trading in Great Britain received over 90,000 complaints related to building, maintenance, repairs and double-glazing. These were mainly concerned with shoddy workmanship, the use of inappropriate materials, over-charging and illegal trading methods. Cowboy builders are harming the construction industry and may be discouraging people from undertaking building work.

If you intend to undertake a large project we would recommend that you employ the services of a competent architect or professional designer who may be able to save you money by providing a more economic design. They will be familiar with Building Regulations and Planning requirements and can offer you a site supervision service.

If you feel your job is so small that you don't require a professional seek independent impartial advice from someone in the industry whom you know and trust.

## How to select a suitable builder:-

- **A list of suitable builders** can be obtained from The Federation of Master Builders and the Construction Employers Federation.
- **Select a number of builders** and establish their track record – ask what previous jobs they have done – look at examples of their work – ask if you can speak to former customers (ask them if the builder is tidy, punctual, meets deadlines and if they would use him again).
- **Obtain itemised quotations** in writing from at least three builders and have them checked by your professional advisor – ensure you are being quoted "like for like" (a detailed specification may be appropriate).
- **Ask the builder:-**
  - About his expertise in your particular type of project
  - How he wants to be paid – on completion or in stages

- Will he give you itemised invoices?
- Is he happy for you to hold some of the money until the job is satisfactorily completed?
- Will he give you a final completion date?
- Will he accept a penalty clause on failure to complete on time?
- Will he agree to independent arbitration should there be any dispute?

**- and get the answers in writing.**

### Make sure:

You have **all the necessary statutory approvals** –

- Planning,
- Building Control,
- water, sewerage etc.

You have a **written contract covering** -

- the extent of the work to be done by the builder
- how much will it cost
- when the work will be completed

You **do not pay for work in advance of it being done**

You get a **Completion Certificate from Building Control**

