

Homeowner's Guide USA
How 'Social Distancing May Be
Imperative In Resident-Contractor Relations

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***References Appear At End Of This Guide**

Preview

At last, spring is here. No doubt, private home heads throughout the United States have had great plans for a number of projects around the home. New or cleaned swimming pools, window replacement, new cabinets, shaping up the driveway, replacing the roof, etc. Quite a lot on our minds. Greatest of all, many of us know exactly which building trades personnel [as contractors are] we plan to invite over to make our plan materialize.

Yet with the increasing spread of the corona virus pandemic, we may want to seriously ruminate if calling in these home professionals can be delayed. Perhaps until a vaccine is *available where we are*. It may not be quite enough for us to know one has been formulated. If it is not accessible in *our area* of the country, what good is it? We would be taking dangerous health risks without a dependable safety net in the event we are exposed to trades personnel infected with Covid-19. It is not a horrid disease only *others* can catch. Instead, it is one *we* can - without ever leaving home.

Ignoring An Ongoing, Pervasive Threat

Currently, it is very risky ignoring the real threat this globally infectious disease poses to our well-being. Maybe we really are not as privy as we can be about the potential danger of contractors who may test positive for Covid-19. What would be really terrible is if they are *completely oblivious* of their condition. But, certainly what would be worst is if contractors we hire have the virus – and KNOW. It may be for any number of personal reasons. One is that they may have a pressing issue such as meeting their home mortgage or other payments. In such an unexpected dilemma, the disease can be spread to us and to our entire household. Do we sincerely think a dishonest contractor cloaking desperation for money to address urgent bills really cares?

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Stakes Are Very High

We are earnestly taking huge risks going through with planned home projects using building trades personnel – even the best. However, they are ours to take. But are we willing to sacrifice family health by not knowing if whether or not individuals we invite to assist are infected?

According to the latest international pole [as of this guide], the U.S. is No.1 in the world having hundreds of thousands more people afflicted by Covid-19. At last count, *Worldometers*, [a highly reliable global reporting combine, as of May 14, 2020] projected to soon be 1.5M+ corona virus victims in America. That figure is up from nearly 500,000 reported by CNBC and other reliable news sources on April 10, 2020. An increase of in excess of 700, 000 new reported cases in 30 days! [from the time of this guide's re- re-publication May14, 2020] The numbers have literally skyrocketed!

Quite evidently, there is presently no visibly practical gauge for it suddenly switching to any semblance of *flattening* [as some may say it is]. Each day there are *more* confirmed cases. Hardly what we may call a *decline*.

An Indiscriminate Aberration

Furthermore, we may want to acknowledge that the disease is not very particular about our political affiliation, religious faith, occupation, or commercial status. What is paramount that the disease is wantonly afflicting anyone in its path who is not otherwise protected.

Going farther to speak to the subject of home service calls from others in the building trades [diverse types of contractors] - it is reasonably plausible that a representative segment have it. By no means is this intentionally mentioned as a suggestion for across-the-board avoidance of them.

The primary objective is to share the risk factor of ignoring the *indiscriminate nature of Covid-19* in relation to its heightened presence in the United States. Each among us is presumably residing in any one of its major geographic areas. This places private home heads and other residents at very high risk being susceptible to third-party transmittal of the disease. Those of the building trades happen to be in that category.

In this, there is a dreadful relativity between the unbelievably high number of those who are infected and the potential for the number of confirmed cases to rise *exponentially* when in close proximity to residents who are not.

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Beware Unsavory Contractors Exploiting Pandemic

There is also a realizable threat from the corrupt element of contractors attempting to capitalize from Covid-19 health concerns of residents. The approaches may be different but it is very likely they will devise schemes for convincing us that there is something they can do to help alleviate our fears at home.

Recently, it was learned that there was a contractor who frequented Facebook offering Covid-19 remediation services. Initially, this may appear as a very interesting offer. Assuming we are convinced and we arrange a telephone interview. Doubtless, we want to know more. Does he have literature posted online for more details? Is there Covid-19 in our household – or was there?

A Deeper Look

Here is a hypothetical situation. For some, health-wise, this is not. Nevertheless, we tested positive for the corona virus. We have self-quarantined since it is not serious enough at this point for hospitalization. We are following the doctors' orders, loading up with prescribed antibiotics, routinely sanitizing surfaces, etc. Also, once a week we are asked to call in to share an update on our condition.

In this predicament, we are well aware of the fact that the virus now permeates our home. There is only but so much we can do on a daily basis wrestling with the issue. But one day, while on Facebook, we stumble across a contractor offering Covid-19 remediation services. He says his company specializes in it. He also offers a website. But when we get there, we discover the website is the equivalent of a prop – dysfunctional. Just for show.

We would think that a person apparently not competent enough to 'remediate' his own website is hardly adequate enough to address something as *gargantuan* as sanitizing a doghouse. This is naturally to the shame of those operating as contractors who target victims of Covid-19 for scandal.

We May Want To Be More Discreet

Certainly, we can concur that our behavior towards summoning building trades people this year is quite different from 2019. Obviously due to the advent of Covid-19. We may have greater reservations hiring, but these do not prevent us from doing so.

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However, on the *home front*, the disease dictates that if we are not more cautious in this area, those of us who have not been overcome by it, are far more likely to be. It is the precariousness of our present situation which can necessitate greater hiring discretion.

Rolling With The Punches

As head of the household, we have gradually developed routines for attending to the home. Some require essential homecare, lawn and garden, home cleaning, and other services. Much of these are from related contracting firms which have regular staff i.e. people who are permanent employees. We are not considering temporary laborers who are dispatched seemingly irrespective of health condition.

We may want to draw a line there. If we have used temporary services, we may want to modify our preferences for solid companies who specialize in the service we require. In other words, it can be in our best interest to switch over to a home service with a proven track record for satisfied customers.

For more emphasis, if we have customarily used a *generalist* [such as what day labor outfits can be], we may want to upgrade to a firm which specializes in our nature of project. If lawn and garden, we can be a lot safer signing with a credible operation which *majors* on a daily basis in that area. A *specialist*.

The same can be said for hiring for other mandatory chores in and around the house. Fact of the matter is that there are actually projects which must be accomplished on a routine basis. If we have used professionals, it is hardly unlikely, no matter how troublesome the pandemic, we are going to suddenly stop. However, if there are some things we can learn to do relative to that nature of service, then our best option may be to attend to these ourselves. We can also delegate to family members who are able to learn how to do it safely.

Succinctly, it is certainly not the objective of this home guide to encourage irresponsibility towards essential home needs through *banning* contractors. However, if the project is ruled by us as something we can postpone indefinitely without heavy ramification, maybe we can do just that. Perhaps we can re-schedule for this time in 2021. It will be there. Yet our most meaningful object is for us to *be there*, also.

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Summary

1. It is obviously spring. Soon to be summer. There are multiple home projects we have. Many of us have established relations with key contractors to assist with these. But the pandemic changes things. We may want to postpone some projects due to risks of Covid-19 infection.
2. The United States is now the world epicenter for the disease. There are a projected 1.5 Million confirmed corona virus cases before the end of May 2020, roughly 1/4 of the combined countries globally. This is further interpreted as our residents being at highest risk for getting the disease within proximity of infected people in the building trades [of which various types of contractors are].
3. There is real probability that desperate, dishonest contractors knowingly carrying the virus may not inform us to that effect. Also, with consideration to the corrupt element among them, we were introduced to a *new strain* of corrupt contractor scheme: Covid-19 remediation services.
4. Covid-19 is indiscriminate. Contractors are as susceptible as other people to the infection. The risk is much higher in U.S. for some contractors to have it.
5. We have projects which must be routinely addressed during spring and the coming months. But we may want to re-adjust our hiring priority towards a preference to sign on with building trades operations with proven track records specializing primarily in the nature of each routine project. Of course, reasonable *social distancing*, all inclusive.
6. Postponing indefinitely routine [or non-routine] non-essential projects which can require professional attention. Instead, we can learn to do these ourselves or delegate. Surprise ourselves! Could mean long-term savings!

Minimize risks through minimizing contractor hiring on **non-essential projects!**

HOME IS THE BEST WONDER OF THE WORLD!

**Edited with special assistance from D. Madden*

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