Trusted Tradies

FREE CHECKLIST FOR HOMEOWNERS

7 checks before you pay a builder a deposit

Most building horror stories start the same way: a big deposit, a handshake and a quote with gaps in it. Ten minutes with this list can save you a lot more than money.

1 Make sure the company is real

Search the company name or registration number on the CIPC (BizPortal) website. It should show "In Business", and the name must match the quote and the bank account you're paying into.

A quote from one name with payment to another is the most common sign of trouble.

2 Check NHBRC registration on new homes

Anyone building new homes must be registered with the NHBRC. Verify the builder on the NHBRC online services site, and ask for proof that your home has been enrolled before work starts.

Builder registration alone doesn't cover your house: the home itself must be enrolled.

3 Ask who does the electrical and plumbing

Electrical work needs a registered electrician to issue a Certificate of Compliance (CoC). Plumbing needs a PIRB-registered plumber. Get their names before you sign.

Without the CoCs you can struggle to sell your house or claim on insurance later.

4 Keep the deposit small, and never in cash

Be wary of anything much above a materials deposit, often 10–15%. Pay by EFT into the company's own account, never cash and never a personal account.

A large deposit before anything is on site is the single biggest risk you can take.

5 Pay in stages, against finished work

Link each payment to a stage you can see: foundations, roof, plaster, first fix, handover. Hold back about 5% until a few months after completion to cover defects.

You should never be paying far ahead of the work that's done.

6 Get it in writing, with a finish date

A written contract should list exactly what's included and excluded, any allowances, how extra work is priced and agreed, and a completion date, ideally with a penalty for finishing late.

"Approximately 5 months" and "cost plus" are how budgets and timelines run away.

7 Call two recent clients and see the work

Ask for two references from the last 18 months. Ask whether the job finished on time, how extra costs were handled, and whether they'd use the builder again.

Online reviews are skewed. People who've actually paid this builder tell you more.

Rather have it checked for you?

A Trust Check covers the registrations, the company, the track record and a line-by-line read of the quote, in a plain report on your WhatsApp within 2 working days.

R995
Full Trust Check

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