

## Better Business Bureau tips for consumers: Tips for driveway improvements

Written by  
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An attractive, well-maintained driveway can help a home make a good first impression, provide protection against flooding, and even add value to your investment. But replacing a driveway can be a costly endeavor. The Better Business Bureau of Minnesota and North Dakota (BBB) advises homeowners to take the time to choose a contractor they can trust. When looking to hire a contractor for your driveway, the BBB recommends the following tips:

**Start With Trust!** Always check out a contractor on [bbb.org](http://bbb.org) before doing business with them.

**Check references.** Ask for local references and verify that the contractor is in compliance with all local licensing, bonding and insuring requirements. Before you agree to a paving or paving repair job, there are three things to check: the status of the contractor's license, whether the contractor's bond is current, and the contractor's complaint resolution history with the BBB. You may also want to make sure that the contracting company is a member of an industry trade association such as the National Asphalt Pavement Association.

**Get it in writing.** Be sure that the contract spells out which party is responsible for grading and sub-grading, equipment and materials, labor, pavement thickness and smoothness, etc. Make sure the payment schedule is satisfactory and that there is a clear guarantee or warranty for the work. Also, get an agreement in place – in writing – that your yard is to be returned to pre-construction condition. Don't sign an agreement without understanding it.

**Know your rights.** Pay by check or credit card when the project is completed. Make sure to inspect the work for quality issues. If you are dealing with a traveling contractor, be extra cautious and make sure to ask for identification and note the license plate number on the contractor's vehicle. If you get "buyer's remorse," you may be able to change your mind after the contract is signed: In the U.S., the Federal Trade Commission has a three-day cooling off rule for in-home purchases.

For more tips, visit [bbb.org/news](http://bbb.org/news), and for the latest news check out our Facebook page.

*The mission of the Better Business Bureau is to be the leader in building marketplace trust by promoting, through self-regulation, the highest standards of business ethics and conduct, and to instill confidence in responsible businesses through programs of education and action that inform, assist and protect the general public. We are open 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday. Contact the BBB at [bbb.org](http://bbb.org) or 651-699-1111, toll-free at 1-800-646-6222.*