

Home Improvement Consumer Protection Act (HICPA)

In 2008, the Pennsylvania Legislature passed the Home Improvement Consumer Protection Act. This law focuses on home improvement fraud. The law requires that all contractors who perform at least \$5,000 worth of home improvements per year register with the Attorney General's Office. The statute also establishes minimum insurance requirements for contractors; requires contractors to provide their registration number in their ads and contracts.

Home improvement includes: (1) the repair, replacement, remodeling, demolition, removal, renovation, installation, alteration, conversion, modernization, improvement, rehabilitation or sandblasting. (2) construction, replacement, installation or improvement of driveways, swimming pools, pool houses, porches, garages, roofs, siding, insulation, solar energy systems, flooring, patios, fences, gazebos, sheds, cabanas, landscaping work (other than work performed under the Plant Pest Act), painting, doors and windows and waterproofing. (3) without regard to affixation, the installation of central heating, air conditioning, storm windows or awnings.

Home improvement contract is an agreement between a contractor, subcontractor or salesperson and an owner for the performance of a home improvement which includes all agreements for labor, services, and materials to be furnished and performed under the contract. Written contracts are required for any home improvement of \$500 or more.

As of July 1, 2009, consumers in Pennsylvania will be able to verify home improvement contractors registration with the Attorney General's Office by visiting their website: www.attorneygeneral.gov/index.aspx or by calling their consumer protection toll-free hotline: 800-441-2555. The Attorney General Office encourages consumers to use registered contractors when deciding to invest in home improvements.