

Dear Potential Client,

CAUTION! It has come to our attention that a few of our "reputable" competitors may not be so reputable. We have found they are installing product...

(1) ...which is not what they proposed to install.

(2) ...not what your engineer stated to install within the report which you paid for. Remember the law in Alabama and Florida requires PE issue you a report for any and all structural (foundation) repairs.

(3) ...that was not discussed with the client during the site visit (instead writing up this other product which sounds similar in name and/or product), in hopes you don't notice the difference.

When our customers have confronted the other companies with the discrepancies the customer is being told various reasons for these discrepancies. Among them are:

- We've had numerous problems with this other product and are no longer installing them in this area.
- That's just a typo on our proposal. We will be installing the product discussed (or that your engineer recommended).
- That's just a typo. We've never installed "product X"... in Birmingham (or Montgomery, or whichever city you live)...or in Alabama.
- Don't worry. Our "product X" is better/stronger than what the engineer (or job) requires.

Essentially, once our customers realized the obvious deception taking place, and they asked the other companies about the items in question, the companies back track and "explain" their way out of the situation. While this practice is dishonest at the least, it will likely cost you significantly in the long run.

If you have an engineered report, but sign a proposal contract that does not specifically state they are performing the job utilizing the material types the engineer specified, *then you are the sole person responsible for any future issue which may occur.*

- The engineer is not responsible because you agreed to have installed a product which he did not specify.
- The company installing the product is not responsible because you signed an agreement (contract) knowing the product installed will not be in accordance with the engineer's report....whether you knew the product/work differences or not.

Again, you - their customer - bare all responsibility for any and all future issues that may occur to your home.

*Please, read the proposals you receive carefully. If you have an engineers report **does their proposal reference the PE report and specifically state they are performing the work in accordance with that report**...or do they state the proposal is based upon *your* description of the problem? Failure to have an engineered plan of repair can leave you responsible should failure of the structure happen in the future, or serious problems occur during the repair process. Remember, they are basing their proposal on *your* description of the problem!*

*Please, read the proposals you receive carefully. **Does their proposal reference permits and permitting fees?** If not, chances are they are trying to "fly under the radar" of the local code/ordinance inspectors, leaving you highly vulnerable should failure occur in the future. Remember: The law requires a permit be obtained and displayed where it can readily be read by an inspector for every structural (foundation) repair job. *Failure to apply for and obtain permits for the work can result in hundreds, even thousands of dollars in fines to YOU the customer.**

Keep this in mind: The entire State of Alabama adopted the 2009 International Residential Code in October 2012. This new law requires an engineered plan of repair for *any* structural work being performed. This includes foundation repairs, decking, and sometimes even retaining walls. This requirement is for *your protection*.

The vast majority of cities/counties will allow you, the homeowner, to obtain the permit for the structural work being proposed if it is not proposed to exceed a certain dollar limit. In order to pull a permit you will have to provide your city or county with a copy of the engineer's report/plan, as well as the repairing company's proposal. The cost of the permit is usually based upon a percentage of the estimated cost of repairs. The city/county inspector will review both the report and the proposal contract, then approve the permit. Occasionally they may temporarily deny the permit if there are items in question on either the report or proposal contract.

So, if you are a company performing the work, how do you apply for a permit without the engineer's report? Simple. You don't apply for nor obtain a permit, and the company performing the work just hopes they don't get caught.

*Please, read the proposals you receive carefully. **Do they specifically state they will be contacting Alabama One Call (811)?** Or do they make no mention of it whatsoever?*

It is the law to have underground utility line verification performed before digging takes place. If they don't specifically state they are doing this (and then do it), should they encounter one of these utility lines you, the owner, can be held liable for the damages.

Are you trying to base your decision on whom to contract with based upon price alone? If their price for what should be the same work and materials is significantly lower than anyone else's, ask yourself why? What are they leaving out? Are they using legal labor, paying fair wages, providing health/dental/life insurance for their employees? Does the company maintain their city license and insurances... (General Liability protects the company, Workmen's Compensation protects *you!*)...ask for copies of these documents before signing the contract. Are the workers employees of the company or contract laborers? Are they rushing in and doing the job as quickly as humanly possible but not performing the small details, such as packing the space between a bracket and your footing with high-strength concrete; putting up a silt fence when needed; covering any open holes if it's a multi-day job so you, your children or pets, do not fall into the hole(s); shoring the holes per OSHA requirements if they exceed a certain foot in depth? Are they contacting you after you've received other proposals, offering additional discounts...which make you scratch your head and question why they didn't offer you such great pricing to begin with...and why are they doing so now?

Remember there are three things in business which people want:

- Lowest Price.
- Best Service (in this case, speed...how quickly the work will be performed)
- Highest Quality.

The rules of business do not allow for one to obtain the Best Service (speed) and Highest Quality for the Lowest Price. (Think about the models of automobiles from any manufacturer and you'll fully understand.) Yet, there are companies attempting to convince that you are receiving all three!

Don't be fooled. It is your home, so do the research. Pay attention to the details of the proposal *contract*. Are the bulk of their details contained within disclaimers which effectively make you responsible for the work? Or are the details within the Scope of Work so you know exactly what you are receiving and what to expect? Are the proposals equal in materials and time to install the product(s)? Are the proposals "apples vs. apples," or are they "apples vs. oranges"?

Read the fine print. You won't regret it.