



Home Improvement

As your home ages it needs repairs or improvements. If you have been contacted by someone who wants to do this work for you, the first thing you should do is:

Check Them Out!

Are they a local business with a local address and telephone number? Call the Better Business Bureau, the Chamber of Commerce or the Bureau of Consumer Protection. Find out if any complaints have been filed against them.



Ask Around!

Have others had work done by them? Were they satisfied?

Can You Afford It?

Find out the entire cost of the project. Make sure you can afford it. Be careful of home equity loans. This puts a mortgage on your

home. If you cannot make the payments, you will lose your home.

Before You Sign Anything . . .

READ all documents completely before signing. Ask questions. What will you be paying and what will you be getting? Take your time. Never sign a contract the same day it is given to you. Think about. Can you really afford to have the work done.

NEVER sign a document that does not have all the information completed.

If you do sign a contract with a door-to-door salesman, you have three working days to cancel it. Cancellation must be done in writing. The contract should include instructions on how to cancel it. If it does not, send a letter to the company stating that you are canceling the contract.

If you need help canceling the contract, contact your local legal services office right away!

This Issue

Home Improvement	1
Defective Repair Jobs	2
Bulletin Board	3
Office Directory	4

Defective Repair Jobs

By Carl Mollica, Esq.
MidPenn Attorney

Your roof is leaking. You hire a contractor to fix it. The finished job looks okay to you so you pay the contractor.

Three months later your roof starts leaking again and part of the roof looks a little funny to you. You call the contractor. Not only does he tell you that he did the job right, he also tells you that he is no longer in the roof repair business. What can you do?

The most important thing for you to do is to hire a construction expert to inspect the job and tell you why it is bad, what must be done to correct it and how much it will cost to make the repairs. Some contractors will provide this advice at no charge if they are the one hired to make the repairs. Although you can certainly tell the court the results of the job not being done right the first time, it is wise to have an expert's testimony.

If the expert that you consult decides that the job was not done correctly, you may want to try presenting the reasons why to the original contractor and ask that he or she agree to pay to fix the problem. If he or she will not agree to make sure that payment is made, then you have the option of filing a lawsuit to recover the costs of repair from

the original contractor.

The law says that the amount of damages you can claim when a construction job has not been done right is the amount of money it will cost you to make repairs to correct the first job. If the costs to fix the bad job are \$8,000 or less, such a suit can be brought before a District Justice. If the costs are over that amount, then the suit must be brought in the county Court of Common Pleas.



The success of your case will depend upon the ability of the new contractor to convince the judge that the first contractor made defective repairs. You have two years from the time that you discover the defect or from the time you should have become aware of the defect to file a lawsuit.

Remember:

Before you hire someone to do repairs for you, check them out! Call your local Chamber of Commerce or the Bureau of Consumer Protection

YOU HAVE TWO YEARS FROM THE TIME THAT YOU DISCOVER THE DEFECT OR FROM THE TIME YOU SHOULD HAVE BECOME AWARE OF THE DEFECT TO FILE A LAWSUIT.



Bulletin Board



York Paralegal Receives Award

Carolyn Sexton, a paralegal in the York office of MidPenn Legal Services, recently received the 2004 Jane Alexander Award. This award is given to outstanding women in the law, and is presented by the York County Bar Association.

Pictured from left to right: Rhodia D. Thomas, Esq., MidPenn Executive Director, John Mitton, Esq., York Manager, Carolyn Sexton, Gerry Studzinski, Esq.

Call Us! The Clock is Ticking!

Your legal problems won't go away just because you want them to! Anytime you are served with legal papers it is in your best interest to get legal help immediately.



You need to act quickly to protect your rights. Waiting too long can mean missed deadlines and seriously limit the amount of help an attorney will be able to give you.

Schuylkill Office Relocates

The Schuylkill County Office of MidPenn Legal Services has moved to 315 North Centre Street, Suite 201, Pottsville, PA 17901.

Applicants for services can call the new toll free number—800-299-6599 or 610-376-8656.

Staff Recognition

Please join us in recognizing the following MidPenn staff members who are celebrating 30+ years of dedicated service and advocacy this year.

Valerie Case	Paralegal	Lancaster	35 yrs.
Jim Kearney	Attorney	Lebanon	32 yrs.
Steve Krone	Attorney	Harrisburg	34 yrs.
Don Marritz	Attorney	Gettysburg	30 yrs.
Carolyn Sexton	Paralegal	York	30 yrs.

2003 Annual Report Available

MidPenn's 2003 Annual Report is available on-line at www.midpenn.org.
If you would like a hard copy of the report contact Linda Lovett at 814-238-4958, Ext. 134.

MidPenn Legal Services
2054 East College Avenue
State College, PA 16801

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We're on the web!
www.Midpenn.org

MidPenn Legal Services Office Directory

Administration

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Harrisburg, PA 17101
717/234-0492
Fax: 717/234-0496

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211 1/2 East Locust Street
Clearfield, PA 16830
814/765-9646
Fax: 814/765-1396

Lewistown

3 W. Monument Sq., Ste. 203
Lewistown, PA 17044
717/248-3099
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Altoona

205 Lakemont Park Boulevard
Altoona, PA 16601
814/943-8139
Fax: 814/944-2640

Gettysburg

128 Breckenridge St.
Gettysburg, Pa 17325
717/334-7624
Fax: 717/334-0863

Pottsville

Park Hotel
315-317 N. Centre St.
Pottsville, PA 17901
570/628-3931
Fax: 570/628-9697

Bedford

322 S. Juliana St.
Bedford, PA 15522
814/623-6189
Fax: 814/623-6180

Harrisburg

213-A N. Front St.
Harrisburg, PA 17101
717/232-0581
Fax: 717/232-7821

Reading

501 Washington Street #401
Reading, PA 19601
610/376-8656
Fax: 610/376-8650

Carlisle

8 Irvine Row
Carlisle, PA 17013
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Fax: 717/243-8026

Lancaster

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Lancaster, PA 17603
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Fax: 717/295-2328

State College

2054 East College Avenue
State College, PA 16801
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Chambersburg

230 Lincoln Way E., Ste. A
Chambersburg, PA 17201
717/264-5354
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Lebanon

513 Chestnut St.
Lebanon, PA 17402
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York

256 East Market Street
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Keynotes is general information and not specific legal advice. If you have a specific legal problem, you should consult an attorney.

MidPenn Legal Services is a private, 501(c)(3) corporation providing legal services to low-income people living in Adams, Bedford, Berks, Blair, Centre, Clearfield, Cumberland, Dauphin, Fulton, Franklin, Huntingdon, Juniata, Lancaster, Lebanon, Mifflin, Perry, Schuylkill and York Counties.

