



The Trustworthy HVAC Contractor Checklist

By: Jr Crocker

To the Reader: My goal in writing this book was to help home and business owners learn more about the HVAC industry. Knowledge is power and when used in the right way you can avoid costly mistakes. I can tell you story after story about well-intentioned people that for one reason or another were taken advantage of by an HVAC Contractor. Don't be a victim. Learn what you can and I hope you can put this information to good use.

Sincerely,

Jr Crocker

The Importance of Choosing a “Trustworthy” HVAC Contractor

Picking a contractor to work in your home can be dependent upon a large number external circumstances. For example, your less likely to be picky on Friday evening when your HVAC system goes out and your house is hot and you think it's a small repair. On the other hand, if the system is 15 years old and not keeping up. You have sunk over \$2,000 in repairs into it in the last 2 years and your light bill is through the roof. You could be a little more picky on the next person you call out since the potential cost for repair is getting higher and higher.

The one thing all of us can agree on is that when we pick someone to help solve a problem in our home; we want the correct solution to the problem to make our life better at the best value possible.

Many times though we don't know enough about the situation to make an informed decision. When the problem is something that is “Out of Sight-Out of Mind” , it can hold less value or importance when making significant decisions regarding it. In this resource we want to provide you with information that will minimize the chance that you will be taken advantage of ripped off by a smooth-talking individual that is trying to separate as much money from you as possible without given you the service you want or deserve.

Price

The first issue that People face, which is a lot of time the only issue they are prepared to face, is Price. When in actuality this should be the last thing a potential buyer thinks of. Let me paint a picture for you,

Two contractors come into your home to give you an estimate for replacing an old HVAC system.

First guy shows up in a 1984 Chevy Truck with rusty toolboxes. He's wearing old jeans with holes in the knees and a Def Leppard T-shirt that looked like it was bought at a concert when the band started touring 30 years ago. He asks you what size the unit is? You tell him you thinks it's a 3 ton. He says “That's good enough for me, there you go... Call me when your ready.” Writes the number on the back of a worn out business card and slowly walks away while he spits into your azaleas.



Needless to say he probably isn't going to get the job.

Next contractor shows up in a clean van with company decals on it. He's wearing clean pressed work slacks with a uniform shirt that displays both his name and the company name. After he discusses what your needs are he thoroughly evaluates the present system. He gives you a printed proposal with options.

So far this guy is doing much better than the last guy right? But his proposal is double what the other guys proposal was. Then you look up the business online and find that they don't have 1 positive review anywhere and you find an article about a lawsuit for burning some ones house down.

Now you are completely confused and scared and don't know who to trust.

The point of this story is that Price is important. But nowhere near as important as the individual or company doing the job. Based on the example above you probably would have been more likely to pick the second contractor until you learned of the reviews and pending lawsuit. What good is getting 3 bids if they all come from the 3 Stooges?

BBB ACCREDITED BUSINESS SINCE NEVER

Your Local HVAC Contractor

123 Main Street Anytown USA

www.Yourlocalhvac contractor.com

Reason For Rating:

Numerous Complaints, Bad Reviews and Lawsuits



Warranty

So you decide to go with the first contractor. The one with the "Bid on the Back of the Card". 8 months later the system is acting up. Won't come on consistently and when it does the lights in your home dim. So you call the number on the card and guess what... "The number you dialed is no longer in service....." So now you have a "New", "Broken" system and no one to call to keep it up.

The ability for the company to stay around and service your new purchase is pretty important. I mean what good is a warranty if the company is no good. You can't always guard against this because some of the biggest companies can still go bankrupt. Generally speaking, a business fails because it can't make as much money as it spends. If the company takes care of the customers, there should be no shortage of work available. Which brings us to our next point which is....

Quality

Lets examine for a minute our last two contractors. If both companies can install the purchased equipment in day. If it takes both men 10 hours to do the same amount of work the quality should be about the same right? What if the first guy has never installed this brand before and it should take him 8 hours, but he has the redo work and its takes another 2 hours.

The second contractor could be very skilled and be able to complete the job in 8 hours but spends another 2 hours testing the output of the system and tweaking it for maximum performance.

Would both these jobs be worth the same amount of money?

Quality could be measured in amount of time it takes to do something but it may not always be what you think. A professional in the industry will know the ins and outs of the equipment they install and be able to finish in a timely manner. If they stay around longer than you think they should it could be to your benefit.

Speed

Obviously when your house is hot, you need service now. Especially if there are small children or seniors involved. The speed at which a company or technician can get to your home in an emergency is always an important factor. However if they are driving an unreliable vehicle (Contractor 1) or are busy with warranty calls or lawyers (Contractor 2) you may be sweating a lot longer than you think...



This Checklist will help you find a “Trustworthy HVAC Contractor” Notice I didn’t say cheap or overpriced. I also didn’t say timely. When you find a contractor you feel comfortable with you should let them determine what the job is worth in terms of time and money. Negotiation is always an option for a savvy buyer. But pick who will give you the best job. Just because a bid is a few hundred dollars less doesn’t mean it’s a better deal. This isn’t like shopping at Wal-Mart. Besides, how many times have you either thrown away or taken back products bought of the end of the aisle of Wal-mart’s “Bargain” section. You will be much happier in the long run if you work with people you like and trust rather than just “cheaper”.

The “List”

When selecting a HVAC Contractor the best place to start is with the basics. Not having one or more of these could definitely remove them from the list.

License

Every HVAC contractor in the state of Texas is required to have a license. To get this license someone in the company has to have passed exams for the license they carry. You can visit the TDLR search portal with any information you have about the company to see if they are in the state database.

<http://www.license.state.tx.us/licensesearch/>

There are 2 Classes of licenses in the Texas database and each Class carries up to 3 endorsements.

Classes- Classes are found in the 5th position of a license Number. TACL”**A**”28789C

Class A- No size restrictions and \$600,000 insurance coverage minimum

Class B-Size Limits- No Greater than 25 Tons (Fine for Residential and some commercial) \$300,000 insurance coverage minimum.

Endorsements- Endorsements are found at the end of a license number TACLA28789”**C**”

E= Enviromental Air Conditioning – Can work on any type of Air conditioning system in the class for the license. (Nothing else)

R= Refrigeration – Can work on any type or refrigeration equipment in the class for the license. (Nothing else)

C= Combination – Can work on either Air Conditioning Systems or Refrigeration in the class for the license. (No Limits)

Insurance

To be licensed in the state of Texas you must maintain an insurance policy meeting certain standards depending upon the license carried. The fact that they are in the database is a good start but to verify whether an HVAC company has insurance at the time the job is done you will need to get a little more direct. The most reliable way is to ask for a copy of their current insurance policy. Most contractors are very willing to share this information. If the hem and haw and give excuses. Better get your scratching off pen ready...

Knowledge

The Problem...

How can you check to see if a contractor you are looking to hire has enough knowledge for you to “Trust” them when you know nothing about the industry?.....

Certifications or Third Part Evidence

Most quality HVAC professionals don’t stop their education ever. In fact to keep your license you are required to do 8 hours of continuing education per year. But that’s just the bare minimum. True professionals take part in all forms of education to make sure they understand anything they come across.

There are many different programs throughout the US that test and qualify individuals and companies to hold them to a higher standard. Some companies are just industry groups, some have education and skill guidelines as a requirement for being a member. Some of them are listed below.

Industry Groups.

Air Conditioning Contractors of America

www.acca.org

Great industry group that works to keep contractors in step with latest engineering advances. They provide training and accountability. Usually a member of ACCA cares about their reputation as a contractor.

Refrigeration Service Engineers Society

www.rses.org

An individual based group that has its own skills tests. Members of RSES have demonstrated a thorough knowledge of the HVAC industry.

North Americans for Technical Excellence

www.natex.org

An individual based group that has its own skills tests around each aspect of the HVAC industry. Passing skills tests grant a certification in that field.

HVAC Excellence

www.hvacexcellence.org

An individual based group that has its own skills tests around each aspect of the HVAC industry. Passing skills tests grant a certification in that field.

Home Performance Groups

RESNET

www.resnet.us

A group of energy auditors and raters that look at a wide variety of issues within a home to verify specific performance aspects. Primarily based around energy efficiency they have software that creates models of your home on a numeric scale.

Building Performance Institute

www.bpi.org

A nonprofit group of energy auditors and home evaluators that look at a wide variety of issues within a home to verify specific performance aspects. Primarily based around energy efficiency. BPI professionals also test and verify combustion appliance performance as well as airflow dynamics for HVAC systems and home performance.

National Comfort Institute

www.nationalcomfortinstitute.com

An education and training group that train at a wide variety of issues within a home to verify specific performance aspects. Specializing in airflow dynamics and combustion appliances using the same principles in Building Science.

Business Information

Business information should be readily available at any of the following site or locations. If its not listed on 1 or 2 that's ok. If you can't find anything anywhere.....Beware...

Better Business Bureau

www.bbb.org

Angie's List

www.angieslist.com

Yelp

www.yelp.com

Google Places

Social Proof/Reviews

Any kind of social media is a great place to get third party testimonials or reviews for a local business. Usually things are posted right on their page. These can be a great way to determine how a business works with others that may be in the same situation. This isn't the best way to qualify knowledge but a happy customer is a good thing. Especially if its you...

Facebook

Google+

LinkedIn

References

Any contractor that has done a job or two has references. The more the better. You should ask for at least 3 references of satisfied customers. They should be willing to provide you with a way to contact them. Someone that has had great service doesn't mind sharing their experience if asked. You can also ask about business or credit references with suppliers. This can give you a lot of information about their ability to pay bills and maintain good business relationships. Don't underestimate the power of references. In a large purchase such as a high efficiency air conditioning system you can't be too careful.

How to find "Bad Ones"

There are a few ways to locate bad ones before you ever get started. A good company may still get one or two wrong and it could be ok. As long as they are trying to fix it. Nobody's perfect. However if you see 32 bad reviews and 4 different articles about the same company. I'd steer clear. One of the easiest ways to look it up is use Google. Type in "Air conditioner ripoffs – inyourtown" Or any variation to gather information about companies. Here is also a site you can use.

Rip Off Report

www.ripoffreport.com

Be creative and spend some time looking around. It will save you countless hours and dollars later.

Trustworthy Contractor Checklist

<u>License</u> -	Yes	No	Approved
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<u>Insurance</u> -	Yes	No	Approved
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<u>Industry Groups</u> -	Yes	No	Approved
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<u>Home Performance</u> -	Yes	No	Approved
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<u>Business Information</u> -	Yes	No	Approved
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<u>Positive Reviews</u> -	Yes	No	Approved
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<u>References</u> -	Yes	No	Approved
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Hopefully this resource can provide you some insight into finding a contractor you trust. Good luck in your endeavor to find the perfect contractor. If you have any questions or may need help in a specific area, feel free to email me and I'll try and help you.

Thanks,

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