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After the Flood – Tips for Selecting a Contractor to Help Make Your Home Healthy Again

GRAND RAPIDS – The Healthy Homes Coalition of West Michigan is sharing some helpful tips with residents impacted by recent flooding to help them with selecting contractors. Flood cleanup and the impending mold remediation are unregulated industries where disreputable contractors may take advantage of uninformed customers.

“We want to be sure that people get the best help possible as they try to put their homes back together again,” said Paul Haan, Healthy Homes Coalition Executive Director. “Beyond wasting money on an unskilled contractor, we also need to make sure that repairs made truly protect the occupants’ health.”

The Healthy Homes Coalition offers these tips for selecting contractor for moisture and mold remediation:

- **Get more than one estimate.** Don’t accept estimates prepared over the phone. The contractor should inspect the site prior to preparing a bid. The lowest bid is not always the best. Make sure the contract is thorough and precise.
- **Ask for references and qualifications.** A good contractor can provide names and numbers for past customers who are satisfied. Ask the contractor about his or her past training or certifications that qualifies him or her to perform moisture or mold work. Do they belong to a professional organization?
- **Keep it separated.** Ideally, the contractor who does the inspection and clearance for mold is not the same contractor who is doing the work and all business relationships are disclosed. This provides a system of checks and balances. This may not be feasible with small jobs, but is important with larger, more expensive jobs. Contractors who complain about this level of accountability may not be trustworthy.
- **Not all mold testing is equal.** Mold testing is not a regulated industry. Simply because a contractor gives you air samples does not mean he or she is an expert. In many cases, air samples are not necessary and might be used as a scare tactic to sell the job.

“No one should have to live with mold in their home, but mold is especially of concern to those with asthma, those with allergies, the young and the old. The last thing some one needs after the trauma of a flood is a disreputable contractor takes their money and leaves them with a moldy home,” said Haan.

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