

## Regulator takes outsourcing websites to task

Victorians should be wary of anyone offering their building or plumbing services on online marketplaces and through apps.

The Victorian Building Authority (VBA) warns that consumers should always check the credentials of anyone advertising on online platforms to make sure they are a registered or licensed professional.

The VBA is currently investigating a number of unregistered people advertising their services through online forums.

The VBA's Executive Director of Operations Lynda McAlary-Smith said consumers should make sure they are dealing with a registered or licensed practitioner before agreeing to any work.

"Anyone looking to hire someone to work on their home should take some simple steps to protect themselves and their properties," she said.

"You can check whether the builder or plumber you're looking to use is [registered with the VBA](#) and whether they've faced any [disciplinary action](#)."

Ms McAlary-Smith said that in some cases, people will pretend to be [registered builders](#) or [licensed plumbers](#) and carry out works that require proper training and accreditation.

This includes the installation of gas heaters or the construction of walls, both of which can have critical safety risks if installed or constructed incorrectly.

"Repairing or rectifying non-compliant work can also run into the thousands of dollars, putting added financial strain on homeowners," she said.

"Building a house or renovating is often the biggest investment most people will ever make, so it is important homeowners protect themselves."

In Victoria, consumers need to use a registered builder or building company for domestic building work worth more than \$10,000.

To hire a plumber, always check that their registration or licence allows them to do the work needed.

Five signs your builder or plumber is unregistered or unlicensed:

- They cannot be found on the VBA's Find A Practitioner search engine
- They do not ask you to enter into a written contract before work begins
- They ask for too much money upfront or at each payment stage
- They are not prepared to tell you about, or show you, examples of recent work or provide contact details of former clients
- They cannot or will not show you their VBA ID card

To find a registered builder or a registered or licensed plumber, go to [vba.vic.gov.au/find](http://vba.vic.gov.au/find)

Visit the VBA consumer portal for [tips on home renovation](#).