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General Questions (803) 329-5590

www.cityofrockhill.com/historic

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The Rock Hill Board of Historic Review was created in January of 1989 to oversee and aid in the preservation of the City of Rock Hill's identified historic structures, both within districts that have been locally and nationally designated as historic, and structures individually listed as historic.

Why it's Important to Hire a Licensed Contractor

As a homeowner, it's important to understand what to look for when hiring a contractor to perform work on your home. Your home is an important investment and remodeling can add value but, when the work is performed by an unlicensed contractor or without obtaining a building permit you can run into many problems.

So where do you start? The first thing you should do is plan your project. If you are adding an addition or re-purposing a room for a new use, like changing a bedroom to a bathroom, you will need a floor plan showing the new changes. Sometimes a contractor can help you with these drawings or you may need to consult an architect. If you are remodeling, make a detailed list of the changes you want to make.

Once you know the details of your project you can then contact contractors to get estimates for the work. Get at least two to three estimates. When comparing estimates from different contractors, don't just compare the bottom line cost. Look at the cost and quality of materials that each one is offering. Make sure the estimate includes the total price, the materials to be used, a time table for payments and the expected time line for the work to be completed.



When you find a contractor that seems suitable make sure he or she has the proper licenses. In the City of Rock Hill, contractors are required to have a City business license. South Carolina requires that the contractor have a state license through the Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation. You can check a contractor's license information by contacting the Permit Application Center at (803) 329-5590. If the contractor does not have the

proper licenses, he won't be able to obtain the building permit.

Ask your contractor for three references in writing. Contact the references and ask if they were satisfied with the contractor's work. Ask if the contractor kept to the schedule and the contract terms.

You should always have a written contract with any contractor. The contract should have a detailed description of the work to be done, the material to be used and the equipment to be installed. Make sure there is a schedule of payments and time line for the work to be completed. Be sure you understand the contract before you sign it. Any changes should be noted in writing.

You should never make a large down payment. The down payment you should pay in order for work to begin should be minimal. Beware of a contractor who is asking for a large down payment so that they can purchase the materials to begin your project. Set up a payment schedule that follows the amount of work completed. You should never pay for something that has not been completed. Don't pay for anything in cash because you won't have a record of it.



Make sure the contractor obtains a building permit before he starts the work. Any and all permits should be displayed by the contractor while the work is being done. Never obtain a building permit in your name even if the contractor asks you too. Often times the contractor will ask you to obtain the permit because he doesn't have the proper license or no license at all. By obtaining the permit in your name you are accepting responsibility for the work and not the contractor. Monitor the contractor's

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Why it's Important to Hire a Licensed Contractor (continued)

progress by checking it regularly. Notify the contractor of any work not completed as agreed upon. Take pictures of the job in progress.

Don't make the final payment for your project until the work is complete. Make sure you are satisfied with the work. Keep a copy of all the paperwork related to your project. This includes the contract, any written changes, all bills and invoices, receipts of payments and all correspondence with your contractor. You should also keep any photos of the job in progress.

It's important to understand the value of using a licensed contractor and obtaining a permit for the work. A permit allows the City to verify the contractor has the proper licenses and keep a record of the work performed. The City will inspect the work to make sure it's safe and meets the minimum standards of the building code. If you don't get a permit for work performed on your home you may run into problems when trying to sell your home. Real estate agents usually check to make sure permits were obtained for repair work. Following these guidelines should help you to avoid problems with your project. For more information, please visit our website at www.cityofrockhill.com or call us at (803) 329-5590. The RHBHR May 2011 newsletter also has information about building permits - <http://www.cityofrockhill.com/UserFiles/File/Development%20Services%20Webpage%20Documents/RHBHR%20May%202011%20Newsletter.pdf>

By Neva Fisher, PAC Coordinator
Reference: National Association of State Contractors Licensing Agencies, "Hire a Licensed Contractor"

Weatherization: What's at Stake?

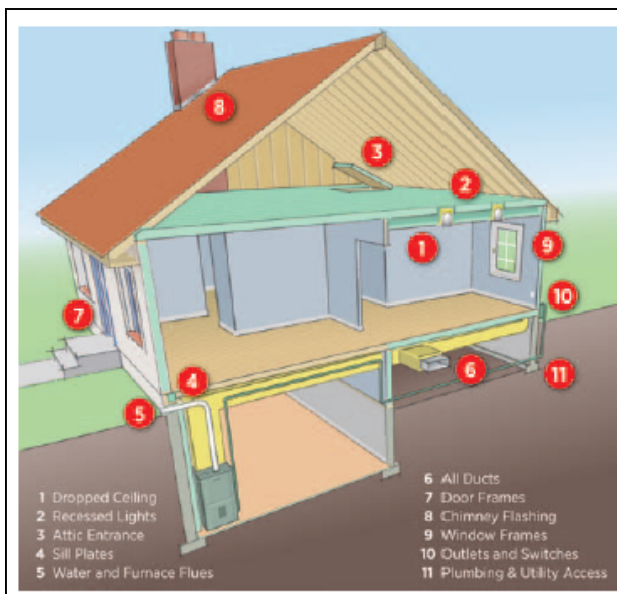
Not since the days of the oil crisis in the 1970's have Americans been so focused on energy consumption, especially weatherization. Just as the cost of heating and cooling has risen, so has the awareness of just how much energy seeps out of an average home every day. Central to this discussion is the role of older and historic buildings – and making them more energy efficient without jeopardizing their unique character. While experience has clearly shown this is possible, in practice, weatherization approaches vary greatly and can result in the unnecessary removal and loss of historic features – most often original windows.

True, there is a lot of information – not all accurate – out there about weatherization. Policies and practices may actually favor and promote replacement products over repair and reuse, despite actual performance. Windows, especially, are often the prime target for weatherization, even though they are not the main cause for energy loss. The U.S. Department of Energy's own [website](#) states that "the best way to improve your home's energy efficiency is to replace them with new, energy-efficient windows." This all-too-often claim does not support all the facts or studies that demonstrate the opposite and show how old windows can be energy efficient.

For good reason, weatherization has been catapulted into the public eye in recent months. The 2009 American Recovery and Reinvestment Act provides an unprecedented amount of funding for weatherization – \$5 billion. Congress estimates that this program alone will weatherize one million homes across the nation.

The stimulus package also includes a 30% energy tax credit (up to \$1,500) for homeowners. This has prompted an aggressive national advertising campaign by the replacement window industry calling for homeowners to act now while there is still time. This is the wrong message, as it leaves out that installing appropriate, energy-saving storm windows (interior and exterior) and doors can also qualify for the tax credit.

Older and historic buildings are often inherently designed for energy conservation and respond to different regional environments. Overhanging roofs, porches, awnings, and shutters can maximize shade and provide insulation. Thick walls provide thermal mass and buffering. Large, operable windows provide natural light and promote air circulation. All in all, older buildings offer these "built-in" advantages.



Sources of Air Leaks in Your Home

Areas that leak air into and out of your home cost you a lot of money. The areas listed in the illustration are the most common sources of air leaks.

Taken from the U.S. Dept. of Energy brochure, "Tips on Saving Money & Energy at Home", www.energysavers.gov

Weatherization: What's at Stake? (continued)

Too often, weatherization and being "green" are pitched as a means for buying new and replacing old. It has become consumer oriented and a profitable business, with homeowners barraged with infinite ways to go green. Looking back to the 1970's and that era's call to action for energy conservation, we should learn from our mistakes. Then and now, there was a rush to tear out and replace with new (especially windows), often at the expense of older buildings and their character. Now, those replacement products are often failing and needing to be replaced again. We now know older windows perform well when maintained and in good working order. They do even better when combined with a good storm window. In terms of cost-benefit analysis, weatherizing a leaky window will nearly always be more cost-effective than installing a replacement. It also will achieve the same goals for energy efficiency.

It is far easier to save energy than one might think, as there are simple ways to reduce our carbon footprints. Older and historic buildings have an important role to play in this discussion. They have stood the test of time and can always be made more energy efficient. If you really want to be "green" and save energy, reusing existing materials and retrofitting older and historic buildings is a smarter, more long-term and sustainable choice that will save both money and resources.

From the National Trust for Historic Preservation, www.preservationnation.org/information-center/sustainable-communities/weatherization/, April 2012

Did You Know?

The average person in the United States stays in the same house for between five and seven years. When it takes upwards of 40 years to recoup in energy savings what was spent to replace windows, many owners will never see the "savings" or fully recoup their expenses.

Incentives for Home Weatherization

Increasing your home's energy efficiency does not have to break the bank. There are a variety of federal- and state-level options available to the owners of older and historic homes and buildings who are looking for financial incentives to undertake larger weatherization and/or rehabilitation projects.

Weatherization Assistance Program

As part of the U.S. Department of Energy's Weatherization Assistance Program, each state is now administering over \$5 billion in stimulus funds for this program, which was created in 1976 in response to the nation's first energy emergency. More than 5.8 million homes have benefited from the program since it first began. An additional one million homes are expected to receive weatherization assistance through the recent economic stimulus funding.

Eligibility: About 38 million households are currently eligible for weatherization services. Any household at or below 200% of poverty, per the modified statute, is considered low-income. About 15 million of all eligible households are good candidates for weatherization. Priority service is given to the elderly, people with disabilities, and families with children.

What You Can Do: Check out the U.S. Department of Energy's [fact sheet](#) and [website](#)

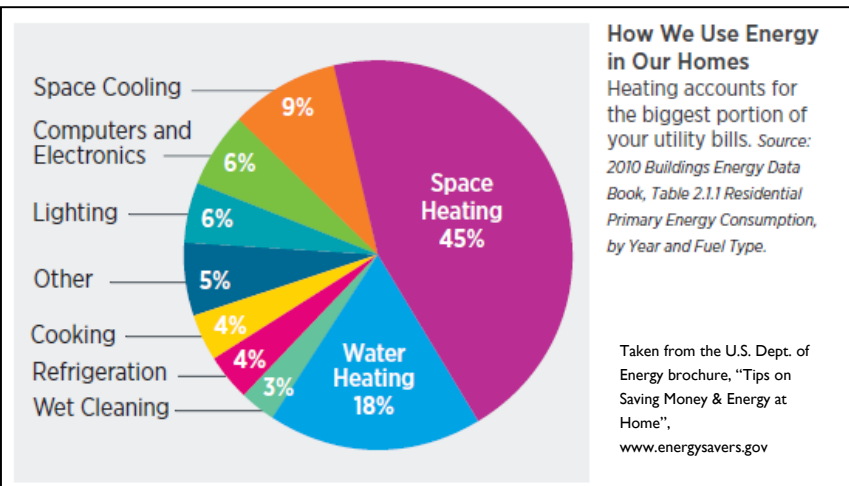
for more information and instructions on how to apply for funding in your state and community.

Homeowner's Tax Credit for Energy Efficiency

The economic stimulus package reinstated and expanded tax credits for energy efficient home improvements – a program that previously expired in 2007. This is an increase in the credit over the one that was available in 2006 and 2007. The current program is available for 2009 and 2010.

Eligibility: The program provides a tax credit for 30% of the cost of eligible energy-efficient activities, up to a cap of \$1,500. Only improvements to your primary residence qualify for the program. Geothermal heat pumps, solar water heaters, solar panels, and small wind energy systems are not subject to this cap, and are in effect through 2016. Installing storm windows and doors are eligible expenses as long as there is a qualifying manufacturer certification statement.

Storm Windows and Doors: There have been many concerns recently about the eligibility of storm windows/doors for the \$1,500 stimulus tax credit. The following Q&A is intended to clear up some of these questions.



Incentives for Home Weatherization (continued)

Question: Do storm windows/doors qualify for the tax credit? Yes. Despite some confusion and misleading information, storm windows/doors *do* qualify for the tax credit. This [chart](#) from the U.S. Department of Energy, the Environmental Protection Agency, and Energy Star clearly lists them as eligible products.

Question: Are all storm windows and/or doors eligible? No, and this is where the main problem lies regarding eligibility. The 2009-2010 provisions established a higher standard than in 2007, and all eligible storm windows/doors (purchased between June 1, 2009 to December 31, 2010) must have a U-value of 0.30 or lower and a solar heat gain coefficient of 0.30 or lower. While it is common for new windows to offer specific qualifications regarding performance, it is difficult to assess for storm windows/doors. Measuring the U-value and solar heat gain of storm windows/doors depends on the performance of the existing window in combination with a storm window, which will always be a case-by-case basis. This can only be tested after storm windows/doors are installed and will vary greatly from building to building. While some storm window/door manufacturers are marketing their products in conjunction with the tax credit, others are not because the performance standard is difficult to substantiate for all cases. Some are listing classes of exterior windows (single pane, clear glass, double pane, low-E coating, etc.) that a product may be combined with to be eligible in [specific climate zones](#).

Question: What do I need to claim the tax credit? You need a Manufacturer's Certification Statement – a signed statement from a manufacturer certifying that the product or component qualifies for the tax credit. Taxpayers must keep a copy of the certification statement for their records, but do not have to submit a copy with their tax return. Some manufacturers are providing these

certificates on their websites, while others are taking a more conservative approach and not issuing these certificates since it can be difficult to substantiate on a case-by-case basis. Though there are others, two storm window/door manufacturers that do provide certificates are [Gorell](#) and [Kaufmann](#). As always, please check with your tax advisor for advice.

What You Can Do: Visit the [U.S. Department of Energy](#) for an outline of eligible expenses. Also, for more information on the stimulus funding as well as and constantly-expanding case studies, check out our [Perfect Storm website](#).



Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grants

With 3.2 billion in economic stimulus funding, this program is assisting local governments in implementing energy efficiency and conservation strategies.

Eligibility: Over 2,300 state, local, and tribal governments are eligible for direct formula grants from the Department of Energy. Competitive grants are also available under the program. Governments ineligible for direct formula grants from the Department of Energy are still eligible for these competitive funds, as well as for funds from their state's energy office.

What You Can Do: Check out the U.S. Department of Energy's [fact sheet](#) for more information. To find contact information for your state's energy office and to learn more about programs that might offer assistance in your community, visit the [National Association of State Energy Officials](#).

State Tax Credits for Historic Preservation

For larger projects, 31 states currently offer credits against state tax liability for the rehabilitation of a qualifying historic building. More importantly, 25 states offer tax credits for the rehabilitation of owner-occupied residences.

Eligibility: Each state administers its tax credit program differently, so it is important to find out the process and to make contact early before starting your project.

What You Can Do: Check out our [state-by-state guide](#) to learn more and to find contact information for the program in your state.

From the National Trust for Historic Preservation, www.preservationnation.org/information-center/sustainable-communities/weatherization/, April 2012



Visit the [SC Dept. of Archives and History page](#) at SC.GOV for more information and incentives.

Lead Paint: Understanding the New Rule

Lead paint is a serious health and safety issue. In recent months, it has become a major topic of discussion and concern for those who care about older and historic buildings. What has prompted this response?

New regulations regarding lead paint – known as the [renovation, repair, and painting rule](#) – were officially adopted by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and went into effect on April 22, 2010. The new rule requires the following:



- Renovation firms must be certified.
- Renovators and dust sampling technicians must be trained and certified.
- Non-certified workers must work under and be trained on the job by a certified renovator.
- Work practices must be followed for renovations covered by the rule.
- Renovators must educate owners and/or occupants.
- Training providers must be accredited.

The stated goal of the renovation, repair, and painting rule is to protect children from lead-based paint problems by focusing on places where children are most likely to be, including housing, schools, and childcare facilities built prior to 1978. In its most basic form, the renovation, repair, and painting rule mandates stricter lead-safe work practices for this category of older properties.

Read the [federal rule in its entirety](#) as recorded in the Federal Register. For an easy-to-read resource on the renovation, repair, and painting rule, check out EPA's [Steps to Lead Safe Renovation, Repair, and Painting](#) (also [available in Spanish](#)). For in-depth background on the renovation, repair, and painting rule certification and training process, including a breakdown into seven specific modules, check out the Joint EPA-HUD Curriculum, [Lead Safety for Renovation, Repair, and Painting Instructor Manual](#).

Why is lead a concern?

According to the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) [website](#), the two primary hazards come from paint chips and lead dust.

Paint chips come from paint that is peeling, chipping, cracking, or chalking. This typically occurs in areas that have moving parts or that endure wear and tear, such as banisters, doors and door frames, fences, porches, railings, stairs, and windows and window jams.

The most common sources of lead dust are from points of friction where painted surfaces rub and from dry scraping, dry sanding, or heating lead paint. The dust can be virtually invisible and can spread around a home by sweeping and vacuuming with a non-HEPA (high efficiency particulate air) vacuum.



Importantly, the EPA states that if your paint is in good condition, it is usually not a hazard.

How is lead-based paint identified?

Generally, paint testing must be performed prior to renovation on all surfaces to be affected by the work or when you must presume the paint is lead-based. Any testing must be performed by the appropriate qualified professional, such as certified renovators, inspectors, or risk assessors. Types of testing include paint chip sampling and laboratory testing, x-ray fluorescence instruments, and Environmental Protection Agency recognized test kits. After September 1, 2010, test kits must be able to determine whether or not lead-based paint is present.

What is covered by the renovation, repair, and painting rule?

The renovation, repair, and painting rule applies to paid contractors working in pre-1978 housing, childcare facilities, and schools

with lead-based paint. Contractors include home improvement contractors, maintenance workers in multi-family housing, painters, and other specialty trades.

The covered facilities include residential (including single-family, owner-occupied homes), public or commercial buildings where children under the age six are present on a regular basis, and all rental housing. The rule applies to renovation, repair, or painting activities. It does not apply to minor maintenance or repair activities affecting less than six square feet of lead-based paint in a room or less than 20 square feet of lead-based paint on the exterior. An activity such as window replacement, for instance, is not considered to be minor maintenance or repair.

What does the renovation, repair, and painting rule require?

The renovation, repair, and painting rule, issued under the authority of section 402(c) (3) of the Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA), requires:

- Renovators be trained in the use of lead safe work practices.
- Certification for renovators.
- Accreditation for providers of renovation training.
- Adherence to specific work practice standards.

What is not covered by the renovation, repair, and painting rule?

The renovation, repair, and painting rule does not apply to:

- Minor repair and maintenance activities that disrupt six square feet or less of painted surface per room for interior projects, and 20 square feet or less of painted surface for exterior projects.
- Renovations where it is determined the renovation will not involve lead-based paint. The determination that the

Lead Paint: Understanding the New Rule (continued)

components affected by the renovation are free of lead-based paint can be made by a certified inspector, risk assessor, or certified renovator using an Environmental Protection Agency recognized test kit.

- Owner-occupied housing where the owner is performing his/her own renovation work.

What work practices are required through the renovation, repair, and painting rule?

Examples of work practices required by the new renovation, repair, and painting rule include:

- Renovations must be performed by certified firms.
- Certified firms must use certified renovators to perform certain activities and provide on-the-job-training for uncertified workers.
- Firms must post signs clearly defining the work area and warning occupants and other persons not involved in renovation activities to remain outside of the work area.
- Before beginning the renovation, the firm must isolate the work area so that no dust or debris leaves the work area while the renovation is being performed.
- Waste from renovation activities must be contained to prevent releases of dust and debris.
- After the renovation is complete, the firm must clean the work area. The certified renovator must verify the cleanliness of the work area using a procedure involving disposable cleaning cloths.

Certain dangerous work practices are prohibited for every renovation, including minor maintenance or repair jobs. These prohibited practices include open flame burning or torching; sanding, grinding, needle gunning, or blasting with power tools and equipment not equipped with a shroud and

high efficiency particulate air vacuum attachment; and using a heat gun at temperatures greater than 1100° F.

What are the responsibilities of the firm?

Firms performing renovations must ensure that:

- All persons performing renovation activities are certified renovators or have received on-the-job training by a certified renovator.
- A certified renovator is assigned to each renovation performed by the firm.
- All renovations are performed in accordance with applicable work practice standards.

How does a firm become certified?

Firms that perform renovations for compensation will apply to the Environmental Protection Agency or a state that has an approved program for certification to perform renovations. Firms will have to apply for re-certification every five years.

Is there a guide to help me understand the new renovation, repair, and painting rule?

The Environmental Protection Agency has published a 34-page handbook, [Small Entity Compliance Guide to Renovate Right: EPA's Lead-Based Paint Renovation, Repair, and Painting Program](#) (also [available in Spanish](#)). This handbook is for contractors, property managers, and maintenance personnel working in homes, childcare facilities, and schools built before 1978.

From the National Trust for Historic Preservation, www.preservationnation.org/information-center/sustainable-communities/weatherization/, April 2012

Building Rock Hill



Historic Rock Hill has added a new resource for historic research – Building Rock Hill. Accessed online at www.buildingrockhill.com, this website is a treasure trove of photographs and information about historic buildings throughout the City of Rock Hill. It is a treat to look at photographs of a time gone by and see how much has changed over Rock Hill's relatively short lifespan! Additionally, if you have photographs or information about particular buildings or people, you have the opportunity to share those with the community.



Historic Walking Tour

The City of Rock Hill recently introduced the updated Historic Walking Tour with new brochures and audio formats, as well as taking you along a new route that includes many more sites than the original version. The route is approximately 1.25 miles long, and takes you down East White Street (look for the beautiful Rose Windows at the First ARP Church), along Dave Lyle Boulevard (ever seen the Rock?), up East Main Street (look for the wheels on one of the buildings), down Elk Avenue (Kinch's might be open for lunch!), around Black Street (that's a cute little brick house), up Oakland Avenue (they moved the old post office how?), and back to the Historic White Home. More information about the tour is available online at www.onlyinoldtown.com/historictour.

