

# Wisconsin BBB: Scam alert - need a new driveway? Look out for asphalt paving scams

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*Milwaukee, Wis.* – If your driveway needs paving or repairs, don't trust just anyone to do the job. [BBB Scam Tracker](#) has numerous reports of unscrupulous contractors who trick homeowners with supposedly good deals. Homeowners end up with shoddy pavement — or nothing at all — to show for what they paid and, in some cases, have lost over \$8,000 in the process.

## How the scam works

A contractor leaves a pamphlet or shows up at the door. They claim they've been doing work in the area and just happened to notice the condition of your driveway or sidewalk. Since they're already working nearby, they can give you a discount. If the price is agreeable, they will then ask for a large percentage of the fee upfront. There is some hesitancy if there is a question on the price or details about the business and its location.

Once the transaction is complete, the scam contractor may disappear altogether. The contact number or email may not work, quickly helping you realize that the contact information was a sham. If you protest, the contractor may use intimidation tactics, such as threatening a lawsuit, to convince you to pay up.

In other cases, once complete, the contractor's work is shoddy and unprofessional, but the full payment has been made. Reaching the company the contractor allegedly represented is impossible, or another company was impostored in the process. In any of these scenarios, the chances of getting a refund or the work fixed are slim.

## How to avoid contractor scams

- **Be wary of unsolicited offers.** Most scams involving contractors begin when a random contractor makes an effort to go out of their way to offer an estimate that was never requested.
- **Research companies and contractors before you hire.** Start with [BBB.org](https://www.bbb.org). If the contractor has multiple negative reviews and complaints, don't hire them. Often, a simple internet search will reveal companies or individuals that have been involved in fraudulent activities or provided unsatisfactory work to previous clients.
- **Get everything in writing.** Ask for an estimate in writing before payment is even discussed. Don't let a contractor start working on a project until a written, signed contract outlining start and complete dates, a detailed description of the work to be provided, material costs, payment arrangements, and warranty information is provided.
- **Stagger payments.** Most contractors will require a percentage of the total price upfront, but it should never be the full price before the work has begun. Instead, agree to stagger payments so that work can be inspected at various stages of the project.
- **Use safe payment methods.** Paying with a credit card provides some peace of mind since the credit card company will help you if the company is fraudulent. If you use a check, write it to a company, not an individual. Paying cash or using an electronic wallet app is risky since there is no way to stop the payment or get some money back if anything goes wrong.

## For more information

Search [BBB.org](https://www.bbb.org) for [paving companies in your area](#). Also common are “free roof inspection” scams- [Learn more about free inspection scams](#). You can also read [BBB's tips on hiring a contractor](#).

If you suspect you have fallen for a contractor scam, report it to [BBB.org/ScamTracker](https://www.bbb.org/ScamTracker). Your report can help alert others to similar scams.

[Sign up for BBB Scam Alerts](#).

Read more about [BBB Accreditation Standards](#) and [BBB Standards for Trust](#).

For more information or further inquiries, contact the Wisconsin BBB

at [www.bbb.org/wisconsin](http://www.bbb.org/wisconsin), 414-847-6000 or 1-800-273-1002. Consumers also can find more information about how to protect themselves from scams by following the Wisconsin BBB on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#) and [YouTube](#).

**ABOUT BBB:** For more than 100 years, the Better Business Bureau has been helping people find businesses, brands and charities they can trust. In 2021, people turned to BBB more than 200 million times for BBB Business Profiles on 6.3 million businesses and Charity Reports on 25,000 charities, all available for free at [BBB.org](http://BBB.org). There are local, independent BBBs across the United States, Canada and Mexico, including BBB Serving Wisconsin which was founded in 1939 and serves the state of Wisconsin.