

Vatter Construction Reveals General Contractor Duties Homeowners Should Verify Under State Registration Rules

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MOUNTVILLE, PA - November 02, 2026 -
Vatter Construction is outlining the general contractor duties that Pennsylvania homeowners can verify before hiring a general contractor, as the state?s contractor registration system returns online and a Senate bill to amend the Home Improvement Consumer Protection Act remains pending.

The overview follows the April 2026 relaunch of the registration platform maintained by the Pennsylvania Office of Attorney General. It draws on rules that apply to home improvement contracts signed in the state.

At the state level, the Home Improvement Consumer Protection Act, known as Act 132 of 2008, requires contractors who perform at least $5,000 worth of home improvements a year to register with the Attorney General?s office. The law broadly defines home improvement to cover remodeling and renovation work on private residences, but it excludes building a new home.

According to the office?s registration page, registration is not an endorsement of a contractor?s competency or skill. The office rebuilt the registration platform after a cyber incident in August 2025 disrupted the Attorney General?s public platform. The online system became operational on April 24, 2026.

A grace period for contractors who had not submitted paper applications ended on June 8, 2026. The office states that the updated system adds automated criminal docket checks to support registrant vetting, and that the registration fee is $100 every two years.

Under Section 517.7 of the Act, the written contract is the central document whenever a general contractor in Lancaster County or elsewhere in Pennsylvania takes on a home improvement project covered by the law. A home improvement contract is not valid or enforceable against an owner unless it is in writing and carries the performing contractor?s registration number.

It must also be signed by both the owner and the contractor. Section 517.6 requires contractors to include their registration number on estimates and proposals. The statute lists required terms, including approximate start and completion dates; a description of the work and materials; the total price or a time-and-materials provision; and the names of known subcontractors.

Contracts must identify the contractor?s liability insurance, which the law sets at no less than $50,000 for personal injury and $50,000 for property damage. Owners receive a three-business-day right to rescind a signed contract.

These provisions extend general contractor duties beyond the construction itself. Section 517.9 bars deviating from the agreed plans or specifications in a material respect without a written change order signed by both parties.

Section 517.4 requires contractors to update registration information within 30 days after a change. For contracts above $5,000, deposits are capped at one-third of the contract price, plus the cost of special order materials listed in the contract.

Senate Bill 1324 would revise multiple sections of the Act, from registration procedures to home improvement fraud. It would also add a letter-of-good-standing requirement for out-of-state contractors.

The bill advanced from the Senate Consumer Protection and Professional Licensure Committee on May 6, 2026, with bipartisan support, according to its sponsor, Senator Camera Bartolotta. The Pennsylvania General Assembly?s bill record lists its most recent action as being laid on the table on June 25, 2026.

Homeowners can confirm a contractor?s registration status through the Attorney General?s online verification

search or the office?s toll-free HelpLine. MyChesCo reported that the HelpLine began serving consumers in November 2025 and that the searchable online database was restored in March 2026.

Vatter Construction recommends that homeowners confirm registration status and review each contract term before work begins. The written agreement sets out both contractor responsibilities and homeowner protections.

Vatter Construction is a general contractor based in Mountville, Pennsylvania, serving homeowners across Lancaster County. The company provides residential remodeling and design-build services.

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Vatter Construction

As experienced remodelers and contractors, we deliver high-quality results tailored to your needs. As a true design-build company, we provide all-inclusive solutions in one place.

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