

## Tips For Identifying “Ghost Websites”

When you click into the website of a contractor or contract firm, there are things which you can look for to ascertain if whether or not you have just clicked into a “ghost website.” A “ghost website” is one which provides little to no information about the person or people most accountable, and the street address which is their “visit-able” base of operations.

Normally, there is no full disclosure about them. Instead, they use images and other information about the services they offer. These are distractions which can often lure you away from focus on the fact that you really do not know whom or what they are..... and, that they are purposely keeping this information from you. Why? Apparently, there are things about them which you do not know which are actually detrimental to you, although, more than often, to themselves. Invariably, by ill-virtue of their purposeful non-disclosure evidenced by their websites, you may want to click out of there quick!

Here are 2 (of a few) fundamental identifiers for “ghost websites:”

1. When you click into the site, please, one of the first things recommended is for you to search for the “**About Us**” hover link. As you know, “**About Us**” is normally not about the litany of services offered or showcasing images of projects. “**About Us**” usually is a public introduction, a full disclosure moment, of key personnel. That could range from the CEO to an entourage of other executives or key players of the firm. If you do not see *at least* an IMAGE and an *official* service POSITION of a *key* individual who coordinates operations of the firm in the “**About Us**” page, get out of there! High probability this is a “ghost website!”
2. Like many other residents, you may conduct an independent online search for the sort of contractor you need for your home project. In your search, you are going to see lots and lots of links for a certain number of “**BEST Contractors.**” These are normally the ads planted by online contractor referral agents (whom are also contractors. They are the “*white collar*” version. They contract with residential contractors for a fee).

You may want to click on these sites advertising a certain number of “**BEST Contractors.**” Yet, when you do, you notice that some have a box waiting for you to enter your zip code. Once done, you notice you are suddenly presented with requests for you to enter all your *project, personal, and location information....* ONLINE! You do not even know these guys! Whoa! “*Ghost Website!*”

Why? The reason is that in entering all your information, you are voluntarily giving your consent to these agents to use any or all of it. However, once you do this, how do you expect to control how all your information will now be shared or used? Also, in the end, you are steered to contractors who are not always BEST! And, although the sites of many of these online contractor referral agents may be configured differently, operationally, they are apparently all the same. **GET OUT OF THERE!**