

Outside Vendor List & Guide

Outside Projects that are Ballantrae Owners Responsibility

Prepared by Ballantrae Condo Association Board

March 2021 V1.0

At our first forum meeting it was suggested that we prepare a list of vendors that our owners have used with success for those projects that the owner is responsible for outside of their unit:

(Air Conditioning, Shutters, Gutters and Downspouts, Windows and Screens, Garage Doors, and Sky Lights)

No vendor has paid to be on our list nor are any recommended by the Association. The following information is for general use with the only requirement for a vendor is that they are licensed in Florida and insured. The information was obtained via a web search and should not be the only information you should use to decide on a vendor. If you are considering a vendor, a reference check is a good source to find out how well that vendor performs.

It is the intention of the Association to create a similar list for vendors that perform services inside of the owners unit. That list will be made available once completed.

Also, it was suggested that for each area a general list of questions that might help in the final decision process for any vendor.

Each area includes vendors that were submitted on a survey that was sent to all owners. The board would like to thank the owners who participated in the submission of vendors for this report.

This information and any updates will be available on the web site

www.ballantraecondoassociation.com

NOTE:

Ballantrae Condo Association does not recommend nor automatically approve use of any of these vendors or their products. Any work done on the outside of your unit requires board approval before the work is completed.

Ballantrae Condo Association does not take any responsibility for any vendor issues arising from the use of that vendor or their products.

COMMONLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT AIR CONDITIONERS

OWNER RECOMMENDATIONS:

Frank Verona - Florida Air @ (941) 926-2606
Barbara Bixby & Pat Paulson - Badger Bob @ (941) 924-1920
Janet Henderson - Perfect Air @ (941) 807-2787
John Frazzini - Climatic Air @ (941) 758-3080
Terri Fairchild – Cool Today @ (941) 921-5581
Pamela Moore – Tri County @ (941) 955-6800

HOW LARGE SHOULD THE AIR CONDITIONER BE?

Instead of simply replacing your old air conditioner with a new unit of the exact same capacity, a Manual J load calculation should be calculated. This HVAC industry standard calculation takes into account a long list of measurements and characteristics including your home's size and layout, your home's orientation, the amount of shade around your home, the number and location of windows, and much more.

HOW EFFICIENT IS THE NEW SYSTEM?

If you've lived with your current air conditioner for long, you've probably noticed that it has lost efficiency over time. Upkeep and maintenance keep efficiency-related losses to a minimum, but after a decade or more, most old systems simply can't keep up any longer.

When you start shopping for a new air conditioner, be sure to look for one with an Energy Star label. These systems meet or exceed the minimum energy requirements established by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). All Energy Star systems have a seasonal energy efficiency ratio (SEER) rating of 15 or higher, which reflects how effectively they remove heat from an air-conditioned space. Air conditioners with higher SEER ratings are more efficient, which can lead to greater savings on your utility bill.

WHAT NEW TECHNOLOGY DO I NEED?

In addition to greater efficiency, many new air conditioners boast technology that keeps your home more comfortable or helps save you money. Look for features like variable speed motors, which typically operate around the clock at a low speed and only kick into high gear when necessary. Other systems are engineered for perfectly quiet operation or are designed to integrate seamlessly with furnaces, thermostats, and other HVAC equipment.

WHAT IS THE INSTALLATION TIMELINE?

If you're planning to purchase an air conditioner to replace a malfunctioning or broken unit, you probably want the new system in place as soon as possible. This is especially true if it's the peak of summer and temperatures are soaring. In many cases, installing an air conditioner isn't a quick process. With electrical, plumbing, and ductwork components to coordinate, not to mention extensive calibration and testing, the installation process can easily take more than a day. If the system is much larger or requires significant ductwork updates, the process could take several days.

WHO WILL DO THE WORK?

Installing an air conditioner isn't a DIY project. Instead, it's a job for a licensed, certified professional.

WHAT BRANDS DO YOU OFFER?

Some HVAC companies sell and service just one or two brands. This can be incredibly limiting, especially if you want the best selection and your choice of the latest technology.

SHOULD I SCHEDULE PREVENTIVE MAINTENANCE?

If you think air conditioner maintenance is only a necessity for older systems, think again. Preventive maintenance is important for air conditioners from day one. These days, air conditioners are designed to last for at least a decade. Neglecting basic maintenance, however, could shorten your system's lifespan significantly. If you've already made it through most of the cooling season without scheduling an appointment, remember that it's better to be late with preventive maintenance than to skip it entirely.

DO I NEED ADDITIONAL AIR QUALITY COMPONENTS?

Thanks to some pretty impressive technological advances, many air conditioners can simultaneously cool your home, keep the air quality high, and maintain a consistent humidity level. If your home is older, susceptible to air leaks and drafts, or prone to airborne pollutants, you should consider adding on select indoor air quality components for healthier, more breathable air.

SHOULD I PURCHASE A NEW THERMOSTAT?

Thermostat technology has advanced substantially in the past decade. If you haven't updated your thermostat since the last time you purchased an air conditioner, then you should almost certainly purchase a new device. More recent thermostats may also be worth updating, especially if they only offer limited functionality or if they don't work seamlessly with your new air conditioner. If you're concerned about the cost of a new device, remember that the right thermostat can ultimately help you save on energy costs throughout the year. Basic programmable thermostats allow you to set a cooling schedule that varies depending on the day of the week. That way your air conditioner will keep you cool without wasting energy while you're not at home. Advanced smart thermostats have the same functionality as programmable devices, but they also allow you to adjust temperature settings from your smartphone or tablet. Some even have geo-fencing capabilities, so they sense when you're close to home and adjust your cooling schedule accordingly. Others provide energy reports so you can make informed decisions to lower your energy consumption and save on cooling costs.

WHAT IS THE TOTAL COST?

When it comes to complex systems like air conditioners, you want to know exactly what you're getting into. Comprehending the total cost of your new system starts with understanding the installation estimate. Any knowledgeable technicians can explain the cost breakdown, including the system pricing, the labor cost, and charges for extras like air quality components or thermostats. In addition to the installation cost, you'll want to anticipate the cost of operating the air conditioner. After all, energy isn't free. Look for the bright yellow EnergyGuide label on the air conditioner, which outlines the estimated annual energy consumption. This label relies on

Department of Energy-approved testing procedures to give you an accurate depiction of both energy usage and operating costs. With this data in hand, you can truly understand the cost of your new air conditioner.

COMMONLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT HURRICANE SHUTTERS

OWNER RECOMMENDATIONS:

Barbara Bixby – Hurricane Glass Shield @ (941) 921-0844

Terri Fairchild – Jansen Shutters & Windows @ (941) 484-4700

Tom and Kathy Hull – Rollsecure Shutters Inc @ (239) 594-1616

Why should people get hurricane shutters?

A: Hurricane shutters are a valuable investment to protect your home, and sometimes even your life from flying debris during high winds. Shutters can also offer protection from pressure from strong winds, which can lead to roof destruction. Not having hurricane shutters or impact windows in hurricane-prone South Florida can result in higher insurance premiums, so getting them is worth the cost.

What kind of shutters should I get?

A: You can get shutters that are as easy as possible for you to deploy, are within your budget, and offer protection. We offer many different styles of hurricane shutters to give you plenty of options on what will do best on your home and what will be approved with your HOA.

Why can't I just put tape on my windows?

A: Because applying tape to your window will *not* offer any type of protection to your home against wind. It can also be very difficult to remove the tape after the storm. This time would be better spent cleaning up anything in your yard that can be picked up and blown around in high winds, to keep those things from smashing windows.

How can I be sure I am choosing a trustworthy company to install my hurricane shutters?

A: Before choosing a company to install your shutters, be sure the company is licensed. You should ask for references, check the Better Business Bureau and check their online reviews.

Can I leave my hurricane shutters up year-round?

A: You shouldn't leave them in the *closed position*. Leaving hurricane shutters closed/over the windows when there is not a hurricane can be a safety hazard. In case of emergency, you would not be able to get out of your home easily, and emergency workers would not be able to get in to help you. It's very important when having shutters installed on your home to know your egress routes in case of an emergency and you need to get out when they are closed.

Can't I install hurricane shutters myself?

A: DIY shutter installation often ends in dismay. You want to be sure your shutters are installed correctly, offering your family the best protection possible. Having a licensed company install your shutters will also ensure that the required permits were filed and they will pass inspection.

16 Questions to ask before you decide on Gutters

OWNER RECOMMENDATIONS:

Frank Verona – Shenk Seamless Gutters @ (941) 812-9050

Barbara Bixby – Seaside Rain Gutter @ (941) 486-0496

Par Paulson – D & D Seamless Gutters @ (941) 371-8805

Are your gutters “seamless”?

Gutters are considered “seamless” when they are installed in a continuous manner from corner to corner. Seams should only occur at the corners.

What type of seams does your company use on corners?

There are three types of corner seams commonly used. The corner with the least amount of seams has the least chance of a leak developing. Different corner styles have more seams than others. **Box Miter:** A preformed corner that actually has 3-seams per corner. Mainly used because they are inexpensive and don’t require skilled labor to install.

Strip Miter: A seam formed in the corner and held together by a separate thinner strip of aluminum material. Also less expensive to produce, it actually creates 2-seams per corner with the “strip” requiring paint due to discoloration over time. **Custom Hand Mitered:** Crafted by a skilled gutter installer, this seam has only one seam per corner. It fits tighter, stronger and longer. Audubon uses only custom hand mitered corners when installing gutters.

How do you fasten the gutters to the home? Nails or screws?

Nails (or spikes): Generally an older style method, the nail goes through the outside of the gutter, and passes through the inside and attaches (hopefully) into the fascia board and rafter. Nails tend to pull out over time due to weight of water in the gutter causing sagging and detachment from the home. **Screws:** A more reliable method because screws don’t pull out over time and don’t corrode. Installers use 2 ¾” screws to attach the gutter to the home through the fascia board and into the rafter. Be sure the screws are “long-form” screws, over 2 ½”, some companies will use a shorter screw (¾” or 1”) which saves time on labor and cordless drill batteries, but doesn’t hold to anything other than the fascia, which wasn’t meant to fully support a gutter.

Should I choose aluminum over galvanized gutters?

Galvanized: The standard until the 1980s, malleable and easy for a sheet metal worker to install, but prone to corrosion and decay. **Aluminum:** The present industry standard. Strong, durable, doesn’t corrode and is easily formed (rolled) by a gutter machine on the job site.

What types of styles are available?

There are a wide variety of styles and colors available. The more committed the company to the gutter business, the more options a company will have.

Style types:

- Seamless Aluminum Leafguard Gutter System: One-Piece
- Seamless Half-Round 6" Aluminum or Copper Gutters
- Seamless New Orleans Traditional Box Gutter Aluminum or Copper
- Seamless 5" & 6" Standard Aluminum and Copper Gutters

There are other types of "leaf-free" products on the market, which are considered "add-ons": screens, helmets and flashing style attachments make up "add-on" choices. "Add-ons", while inexpensive, are considered a short-term solution, because they must be installed as new onto the existing gutter framework. "Add-ons" are typically installed or attached to the homes roofing shingles or decking, which voids the existing roof warranty.

Are your installer's Subs? Or Fulltime employees of your company?

Subs: 9 out of 10 gutter installation companies use subcontractors, which basically means they hire someone else to do the job they sold you. Using subcontractors on a job can cause problems for the homeowner because the homeowner is put in between the relationship of the gutter company and their Sub. If there is a problem or complication the homeowner has to work with two companies to hopefully have the job completed and to their satisfaction. Fulltime Employees: It is best to have your job done by a company who uses their own fulltime employees, that way there is no confusion or complication as to who is ultimately responsible for your job. Fulltime gutter installers are committed to one line of work and considered more to be craftsmen than laborers.

Are the installers Drug-Tested?

The jobsite is your property, your home. Always deal with the highest quality installers you can find. Drug testing helps eliminate undesirable workers from being near your property or family. Drug testing also increases safety on the job site by decreasing injuries.

Are all workers on the job insured?

Being assured that you are working with a company that has liability insurance and workmen's compensation binders which covers your home AND their employees (or Subs, if they use them). The company should be able to provide you with specific documentation to show they bear responsibility.

Will I be able to identify all your workers?

The jobsite is your property, your home. Make sure that you will always be able to identify the company's workers by sight (so you don't have to ask them who they are and should they be here).

Does your company have a job expeditor?

An Expeditor works for the installation company. The Expeditor's job is to evaluate the job before work begins. The Expeditor rechecks the Sales Estimators calculations and makes sure there were no unforeseen complications that could occur after the job begins. Having an Expeditor eliminates many problems that can crop up during installation.

How many days will the job take?

Barring weather or unforeseen complications, all jobs should take only two days. The first day: removal of the existing gutter (including haul away) and preparation for the new. The second day: the entire installation should be completed.

What about clean-up of the job site?

After the work is complete, except for the appearance of the new gutters, the worksite should look the same as it did before the work began.

Does your company have any complaints registered with the BBB?

Checking for complaint with the Better Business Bureau is your job. It's easy, just call 504-581-6222. All you will have to do is input the companies phone number that you are investigating. You will find if there are any complaints on file.

If I buy the Leafguard product, will I ever have to clean out my gutters again?

NO! Even if for some bizarre reason the gutters are clogged you will still be responsible to clear them out of debris.

Can you repair prior damage to the home?

Sometimes after removal of existing gutters wood damage is found in areas that couldn't be seen before. A reputable gutter company will have a carpenter on staff to repair the area. Fees for repairs are typically charged by the foot.

What type of Satisfaction Guarantee does your company have?

A satisfaction guarantee means exactly that; the job is not complete until the homeowner is satisfied with the work performed.

7 Questions to Ask When Buying Windows and Doors

OWNER RECOMMENDATIONS:

Pat Paulson – New South Windows @ (941) 925-4000

Pamela Moore – PGT @ (800) 282-6019

Tom and Kathy Hull – Suncoast Rescreen @ (941) 526-2985

Terri Fairchild – Meyers Screen @ (941) 927-8377

Janet Henderson – Does Not Recommend – Screen Works

Are you looking into purchasing new windows and doors for your home?

If so, then you are probably coming to the realization that this process is overwhelming and costly.

Not to mention the fact that you want to be confident in the company that you choose because you will be inviting the individuals into your home to achieve drastic physical changes.

Many homeowners will put in half the effort because this process can be so time-consuming. They'll end up choosing the first person they interview and potentially make a huge mistake.

Prevent this problem and use our guide to buying windows and doors below to ensure that you find the best contractor for your job today.

1. What is the full name and address of the company?

If you are buying windows and doors, then you must first get the full name and address of the company.

This can help you determine their time in business and experience level.

Try to hire a contractor that is located nearby, to increase the chances of better service and quicker response time.

2. Does the company carry insurance?

Next, make sure that the company has comprehensive liability insurance and workers' compensation insurance to protect you if an accident occurs.

You can verify this by asking to see their certificates of insurance. Make sure that the contractor knows you want to see the proof before the job is started.

Uninsured contractors will be cheaper to hire because they don't have large insurance premiums to pay, but you'll be better protected by those who follow the standards versus those who don't.

And insurance only **helps the contractors** as well, by ensuring that they can cover damages and protect themselves in case unfortunate scenarios arise. It will be up to you to decide if it is worth the risk to hire a contractor who does not carry insurance.

3. What does the company specialize in?

There are plenty of choices out there when searching for a company to install new windows and doors.

You need to determine which companies are experts in their field, as many will offer similar product ranges.

You will also want to make sure that their expertise lines up with what you actually need for your home so that you receive exactly what you desired at the end of the installation process.

4. How long has the company been in business?

When buying windows and doors, make sure that you know the business history behind the company that you are hiring.

Try to stay away from companies that can't provide you with a detailed history of their experience. Check the credit ratings as well to get an idea of how reliable they are.

Newer businesses may have a great future, but it is up to you to decide whether or not you hire someone new in the game. If they have the testimonials and reviews to back them up, they may be worth it.

Longer histories are generally better, but companies do have to start somewhere, which leads us to our next question...

5. Will the company provide references from previous jobs?

Ask for photos of completed work if available, to make sure that their work lines up with what you want.

Many contractors may not have photos available, however, so it is important to request a list of their most recent customers over the last 12 months.

Ask for their names and phone numbers and make sure you call a few of them to ensure the work is of the highest-quality. When you **call for references**, you will also want to check up on:

- What kind of work was performed
- The expectations versus reality
- Timeliness
- Credentials
- What the experience was like
- The budget
- Overall happiness

By getting a detailed account from a previous customer, you will be able to determine whether or not a contractor will fit the bill for your needs.

6. What products do you use?

When it comes to buying windows and doors, you need to find out what products the contractors use and endorse to see if they line up with your needs.

Plus, there are tons of new products coming out in the market every day. These innovations mean that windows and doors are becoming more thermally efficient, slimmer, durable, and recyclable.

Not to mention, this question will come in handy if you are looking for a unique, custom job for your home.

Custom windows and doors can **increase your home value** by 96.5%, but they will also be pretty hefty projects to take on. While the improvement will be great, you will still have to take on the amount of work required. Figure out what you need and then talk to your contractors to make sure you are a good fit for each other before starting the job.

7. What happens if I need help after the installation?

Last but not least, when buying windows and doors, make sure you ask about follow up before the project gets started.

When hiring a company, you want to make sure you will be able to stay in touch with the installers. You don't want to end up with a company that will disappear upon installation.

Find a friendly company that is easy to contact and willing to be there for aftercare services, for the chance that you have future problems.

These special companies will also be around to offer advice to maintain your windows and doors, which can especially come in handy during certain times of the year like **winter**. You are going to want that high-quality service by a company that will do everything possible to help you, even after installation.

5 Questions to ask before buying a new garage door

OWNER RECOMMENDATIONS:

Frank Verona – MyHome Garage Door @ (941) 216-0042

Barbara Bixby & Pat Paulson – D & D Garage Door @ (941) 371-7242

Terri Fairchild – Overhead Door @ (941) 955-8343

Pamela Moore – Overhead Door @ (941) 955-8343

Do I need a new garage door?

The reality is, wooden garage doors tend to deteriorate over time and metal doors will dent and damage. If your garage door is old and has excessive wear and tear, replacing it with a new garage door is necessary. If your garage door only has broken hardware, such as the track or springs, consider having a professional come out to repair your door. This could extend the life of your garage door and save you money.

What kind of garage door do I need?

Once you've decided that a new garage door installation is needed, you need to decide what kind of door you need. Depending on your style and design, the most common materials available are wooden, steel, or aluminum garage doors. Each type of garage door has their own benefits and level of maintenance required. You can also choose the style of your door. Garage door styles include carriage house, traditional, contemporary or a custom garage door. There are also different options available including windows, paint, and stain type. You want to choose a style that fits the look and feel of your home and fits into your budget and maintenance abilities.

Do I need an insulated garage door?

What are you using your garage for? Does your garage need to be climate controlled? Is your garage attached to your home? If your garage is used primarily for outdoor equipment and tools or isn't attached to your home, then investing in a non-insulated garage door is the best choice. Non-insulated garage doors are less expensive compared to insulated and custom doors. If your garage is attached to your home or is used for store items that need to be in a climate controlled area, then an insulated garage door is necessary. Insulated garage doors are more energy efficient, especially in colder climates. If your garage is below a bedroom in your home, an insulated door can help save on the cost of heating and cooling your home. Insulated garage doors also tend to be more durable and less noisy than a non-insulated door. Investing in an insulated door can save you money over the life of your garage and home.

Will my garage door have a warranty?

Before purchasing a garage door, educate yourself on the warranty offered with your door. Garage door warranties vary depending on the manufacturer, so it's important to know what your warranty covers and how long you're covered for. Some warranties only cover defective parts and only cover a certain amount of time. Others may offer a lifetime warranty, but only for the original owner. You may have to purchase a warranty separate from the cost of your garage door. These are all questions and concerns that need to be addressed before you purchase a garage door.

Do I need a garage door opener, too? - If your garage door opener is in proper working condition then replacing it with a new one wouldn't be necessary.

4 Questions to Ask When Purchasing Skylights

OWNER RECOMMENDATIONS:

Terri Fairchild – NBI Suncontrol Hurricane & Solar Film @ (941) 360-8500

A skylight is a novel way to increase the amount of light entering your home, create the illusion of space in small areas, and make your household appear more elegant and upscale. Choosing the right skylight for your home can be a tricky process, particularly if you have never purchased one before. In order to guarantee flawless installation and appearance, you need to purchase the right size, material, and type of skylight. Knowing which questions to ask your roofing contractor will help you to accomplish these goals.

Should I Choose Plastic or Glass?

The first question you should ask when purchasing a skylight is whether you should choose plastic or glass. Glass skylights offer a cleaner, more elegant appearance, but need to be tempered in order to withstand daily wear and tear and avoid external damage. Glass skylights are also heavier and therefore need a stronger roof in order to handle the weight. Plastic skylights are lighter-weight and are typically less expensive. However, they require some form of bubbling, which can alter their clarity.

Is a Fixed or Operable Skylight a Better Option?

An operable skylight allows you to open and close the window at will. This is a great option in rooms where you want some form of ventilation, such as the kitchen or bathroom. However, if you are simply interested in having more light in a hallway or living room, a fixed skylight should work just fine.

Do I Need to Have a Sloped Roof?

A sloped roof is not a necessity, but it does improve the amount of sunlight you'll be able to allow in each day. With a flat roof, you are limited to a few hours of light each day, which will not allow you to truly enjoy the skylight.

What Are the Shading Options?

Your roofing contractor will discuss different shading options with you, including adding a UV tint or a physical window shade. These are a matter of preference, but they can be a good choice in homes where the morning sun is too strong.

If you are interested in purchasing a skylight, contact the team at Walter St. Clair Roofing and speak to a contractor about their selection. Call (513) 641-3265 for more information.