



### *Ask Fred*

**Just because you have a disagreement with your customer doesn't mean you'll be unable to complete your project or that you'll have to sue your customer.**

Question: I have been working on a project for several months now and have come to a dilemma that can't seem to get resolved. I've tried to work with the owner, but so far we can't agree on anything and now we're at a point where the work will have to stop until we can figure out how to move forward. If we can't resolve our differences, what can I do short of filing a lawsuit?

Answer: Many contract disputes are resolved informally, meaning without court intervention. Informal ways to resolve a contract dispute include negotiation, mediation, arbitration and mini-trials, which are all forms of Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR). ADR is successful because most disputes are actually resolved using one of its methods. ADR is also much less costly or time consuming. ADR also allows the disputing parties to be a part of the decision making process. It's important to look to your contract to determine what it may require regarding disputes and what steps the parties must take before resorting to litigation. Your contract likely has a provision for resolving disputes that includes the steps you must take before filing a lawsuit. As with any type of legal dispute, it's important to seek the advice of legal counsel.

Thanks for asking, Fred Gray