

Sign a Detailed Contract that Specifies:

- When work will begin and be completed;
- The variety and quantity of plants that will be used, their placement, and soil amendments (include brand names of all fixtures and equipment to be installed);
- Underground utilities will be checked and that building permits will be obtained;
- The contractor will provide adequate supervision of everyone working on the job;
- Provisions for clean-up and debris removal; and
- A follow-up maintenance plan, and note any guarantees offered by the contractor.

Be Cautious With Payment

- Don't pay more than 10 percent of the project price or \$1,000, whichever is less, as a down payment. **
- Do not pay in cash.
- Don't let payments get ahead of the work.

** There is an exception to this rule for about two dozen contractors who have filed a blanket performance and payment bond with the Registrar. This information is noted on the contractor's license detail page on CSLB's website.



Want More Information?

Visit CSLB's website www.CheckTheLicenseFirst.com or www.cslb.ca.gov, or call toll-free 800.321.CSLB (2752) for additional information and publications about hiring and managing contractors, including:

- *What You Should Know Before Hiring a Contractor*
- *Terms of Agreement: A Consumer Guide to Home Improvement Contracts*

Additional Resources

California Landscape Contractors Association
www.clca.org
916.830.2780

CLCA is a non-profit trade organization of state-licensed landscape and landscape-related contractors.



CONTRACTORS STATE LICENSE BOARD

P.O. Box 26000
Sacramento, CA 95826-0026
800.321.CSLB (2752)
www.cslb.ca.gov • CheckTheLicenseFirst.com

DEPARTMENT OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS

13P-051/0111

C-27 CLASSIFICATION

Choosing the Right Landscaper



CONTRACTORS STATE LICENSE BOARD

Department of Consumer Affairs





A beautiful landscape begins with a qualified professional. Landscaping contractors comprise one of the top five licenses held by state-licensed specialty contractors. The way to get your landscaping project off to a great start is by selecting a reputable C-27 Landscaping contractor.

Does My Landscaper Have To Be Licensed?

Any construction project that is valued at \$500 or more in combined labor and material costs must have a state contractor license. Gardeners who maintain landscaping—usually paid on a regular basis—generally are not required to hold a C-27 Landscaping license unless they install construction-related extras or do repairs of \$500 or more. Licensed landscaping contractors meet state standards for knowledge, experience, and financial responsibility. They have at least four years of journey-level experience, have passed both a trade and law exam administered by the Contractors State License Board (CSLB), have undergone a background check (including fingerprinting since 2005), and they are bonded and have workers' compensation insurance, if necessary. You should ask whether the contractor you're considering also carries liability insurance. If the improvements are for an existing home, a contractor is required to tell you whether they carry liability insurance. The insurance, while recommended, is not required.

Common Landscape Projects Requiring a State License

- Arbors, decks, and trellises
- Drainage systems
- Fences

- Irrigation systems
- Landscape lighting
- Patios, walkways, and retaining walls
- Plants and sod
- Swimming pools and spas *
- Tree trimming
- Water features

Checklist for Hiring a Landscape Contractor

- Verify the license and check references.
- Only hire state-licensed landscaping contractors and verify the license status at www.CheckTheLicenseFirst.com, www.cslb.ca.gov, or by calling 800.321.CSLB (2752). Make sure the license is in the trade or skill that is necessary for your project.
- Get at least three bids. Don't assume the lowest bid is the best; it might not include everything you asked for or the quality of materials you would like.
- Check references and view recently completed jobs.
- Ask the contractor to provide you with copies of their certificates of insurance for liability and for workers' compensation before the work begins.

* Landscape contractors must either have a C-53 Swimming Pool specialty license or subcontract with a contractor who holds a valid C-53 license to legally perform this work.