



The Contractors State License Board, which operates under the umbrella of the California Department of Consumer Affairs, licenses and regulates California's 316,000 contractors, and is regarded as one of the leading consumer protection agencies in the United States.

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AFTER A DISASTER, BEWARE! **DEBRIS REMOVAL & CONSTRUCTION SCAMS**

Door-to-Door

After natural disasters, transient criminals routinely pose as door-to-door home repair contractors and rip off homeowners with their scams.

Not every door-to-door solicitor or family-owned business operates in this way; however, the Contractors State License Board (CSLB) urges consumers to be cautious and to make sure that anyone who offers to assist after a disaster is qualified and state-licensed.

The key is to avoid rushing into any agreement with a contractor you don't know until you have verified their qualifications with CSLB and their work through recommendations from others who have previously contracted with them. A local business license is **not** the same as being state-licensed in a trade, skill, or area of expertise.

For example:

- Debris removal contractors must have a CSLB-issued C-21 Building Moving/Demolition license.
- Home builders must have a General Building ("B") state license.
- Specialty contractors with any of 41 different "C" license classifications can subcontract with a "B" contractor, or provide construction work in their specialized building trade or craft.

In a disaster area, it's a good idea to check with your local building department for any additional permit requirements or guidelines.

Consultants

After experiencing natural disaster losses, always verify an individual's qualifications, whether for contracting, demolition/clean-up, or insurance. Be sure that anyone who claims to be a "consultant" for insurance, demolition or construction has a clean business record and is state-licensed. If any misunderstandings or disagreements occur with a contractor who is *unlicensed*, you have few options to recover your money.

Some consultants offer to "oversee" projects, but they must use state-licensed professionals. Consultants require a state contractor license if they submit a bid and/or supervise the construction. ([Business and Professions Code section 7026.1](#))

Keep in mind that when a project is identified with your local building department as "owner-builder" on the permits, consultants do not take over the legal responsibility; the homeowner holds all responsibility for the project and anyone on the construction site, including employee wages and taxes, and workers' compensation insurance.

License Look-Up is Easy

Checking a contractor's license is easy. Simply use CSLB's website to verify a contractor and make sure there is no outstanding disciplinary action against the license at: www.cslb.ca.gov. You can look up the person by contractor number, business name, or employee name(s). Identical information is available by calling CSLB's toll-free automated number: 800.321.CSLB (2752).

If you or neighbors believe you have been scammed by anyone claiming to be a contractor, please notify CSLB with as much descriptive information as possible, including photos, and a vehicle license plate number. In northern California, call (916) 255-2924; central California, call (559) 490-0580; and in southern California, call (562) 345-7600.