



The Contractors State License Board, which operates under the umbrella of the California Department of Consumer Affairs, licenses and regulates California's 290,000 contractors, and is regarded as one of the leading consumer protection agencies in the United States.

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CheckTheLicenseFirst.com

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 property owners 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.

Remember: Construction work that costs \$500 or more in combined labor and material costs must be performed by a state-licensed contractor.

- Water mitigation (clean-up and dry-out) **or hauling debris**, with no structural alteration, does not require a contractor license. (However, be sure your homeowner insurance policy covers individuals who may be injured on your property.)
 - Minor alteration to a structure in a post-disaster area (taking out portions of damaged walls or flooring, etc.) requires a C-61/D-64 Limited Specialty/ Non-Specialized state license.
 - Structural alterations that are necessary after water, fire, wind or similar natural disasters require a "B" General Building state license.
 - Demolition contractors must have a CSLB-issued C-21 Building Moving/Demolition license when parts of or an entire structure must be taken out and replaced.
 - Specialty contractors with any of 42 different "C" Specialty 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.**
- ✓ **Mold issues are regulated by local health services agencies.**

Consultants

After experiencing natural disaster losses, always verify a contractor'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 be state-licensed 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 it is in “good standing” (current, active, and unrestricted) at: www.cslb.ca.gov. You can search 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 \(2752\)](tel:800.321.CSLB).

Anyone who believes they have been scammed by someone claiming to be a contractor can notify one of CSLB’s Statewide Investigative Fraud Teams (SWIFT). Provide 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.

Construction complaint forms are available on CSLB’s website or by calling the toll-free number.