

CONSTRUCTION PROJECT CHECKLIST

- Check the contractor license number at cslb.ca.gov to make sure it is current and in good standing.
- Ask to see the contractor's pocket license and a current photo ID.
- Ask for a list of current contact information for the contractor, subcontractors, and suppliers.
- Confirm that your contractor will obtain all necessary permits from your local building department.
- Get at least three contractor bids and references and check out each prospective contractor's recent similar projects.
- Ask whether your contractor has workers' compensation insurance for employees and general liability insurance in case accidental damage occurs during the project.
- Pay no more than 10% down or \$1,000, whichever is less.*
- Make sure all project materials and expectations are spelled out and signed in a written contract, including cleanup and debris removal.
- Do not let payments get ahead of the work. Payment schedules and project phases should be detailed in the contract.
- Avoid paying in cash.
- Keep all of your project documents, including payments and photographs, in a job file.
- Do additional online research about your contractor.

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

Protect yourself from unscrupulous or unlicensed contractors.

GENERAL ADVICE

- Only hire **state-licensed contractors** for home improvement projects.
- Any contractor performing work of **\$500 or more** (combined labor and material costs) must be licensed by CSLB to work in California.
- **Don't respond** to door-to-door sales or high-pressure sales tactics. Do your research before hiring a contractor.
- Take the time to **get at least three identical bids** and verify testimonials.
- Ask to see the **contractor's pocket license** or their representative's Home Improvement Salesperson registration. Ask to see a photo identification to confirm their identity.



CONTRACTORS STATE LICENSE BOARD

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

DEPARTMENT OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS

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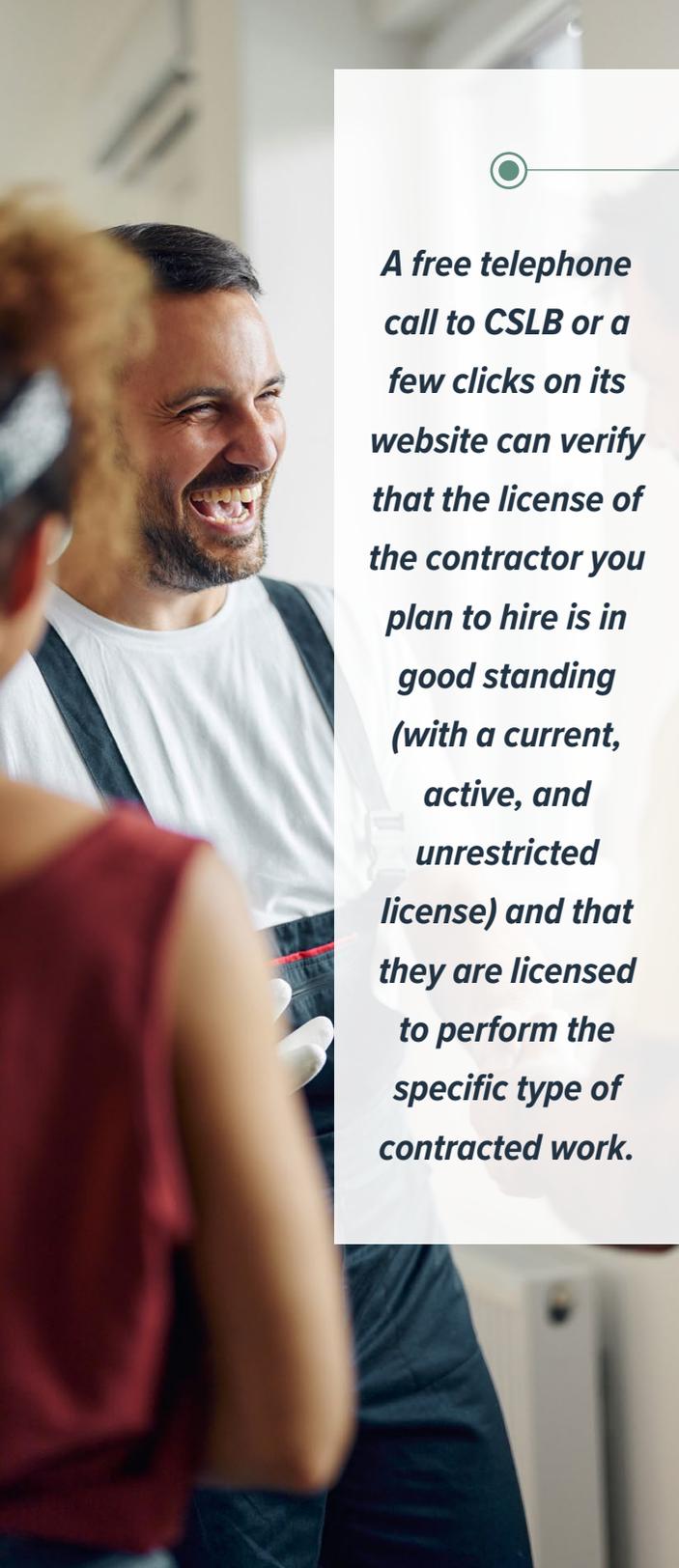
WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW Before Hiring A Contractor



CONTRACTORS STATE LICENSE BOARD

Department of Consumer Affairs





A free telephone call to CSLB or a few clicks on its website can verify that the license of the contractor you plan to hire is in good standing (with a current, active, and unrestricted license) and that they are licensed to perform the specific type of contracted work.

CHECK THE LICENSE FIRST

By law, anyone in California who contracts for or bids on a construction project valued at \$500 or more (combined labor and material costs) must be licensed by the Contractors State License Board (CSLB). To qualify for a license, a contractor must verify four years of journey-level experience in the trade, pass both a trade and license law and business examination, and post a license bond. Since 2005, all new contractors have been required to pass a criminal background check. Contractors are required to put their CSLB license number in all advertisements.

- Verify the license and make sure it is in good standing by visiting **cslb.ca.gov** or by calling CSLB's toll-free automated line: **800-321-CSLB (2752)**.
- Remember: Contractors with employees must carry workers' compensation insurance. (C-8 Concrete, C-20 Warm-Air Heating, Ventilating, and Air-Conditioning, C-22 Asbestos Abatement, C-39 Roofing, and D-49 Tree Service must have a workers' compensation policy regardless of whether they have employees.)
- Unlicensed operators are required to include in their advertisements that they are not state-licensed and can only perform work valued at less than \$500.

FILING A CONSTRUCTION COMPLAINT

- File online at **cslb.ca.gov**
- Print complaint form from **cslb.ca.gov**
- Call **800-321-CSLB (2752)** to request a complaint form and *A Consumer Guide to Filing Construction Complaints* publication.

IMPORTANT REMINDERS

- All changes to the contract, or "change orders," need to be in writing and signed by both parties.
- Homeowners waive their three-day right to cancel (or five-day right to cancel if they're 65 or older) if they sign a service and repair contract, which is different from a standard home improvement contract. (Service and repair contracts are usually for emergency repair work where the consumer initiated the contact.)

LICENSE HISTORY

- If you want information about a contractor's license history and pending or prior disciplinary actions, please call the appropriate CSLB Legal Action Disclosure telephone number:

Northern Region:
(916) 255-4041

Southern Region:
(562) 345-7656