



Industry Bulletin

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California Contractors Board Offers Tips to Out-of-State Contractors Who Want to Help with Wildfire Rebuild

Process streamlined for states with reciprocity agreements

SACRAMENTO – Over the past two years, almost 33,000 homes and structures were destroyed by wildfires in California. In many of the fire areas rebuilding has begun. But, with tens of thousands of homes to rebuild, contractors licensed in other states may be thinking about coming to California to get some of these jobs. Please be aware that you cannot use your contractor license from another state or country to perform services in California.

With that in mind, the California Contractors State License Board ([CSLB click here to go to website](#)) offers the following information and tips.

Reciprocity

If you hold a valid contractor license in Arizona, Louisiana, Nevada or Utah, you may be able to get a California contractor license without taking one of the two required exams.

CSLB has formal reciprocity agreements with the contractor licensing agencies in those four states. CSLB offers reciprocity in specific license classifications where the state's scopes of practice and licensing requirements are either identical or fundamentally indistinguishable from California's.

The following reciprocity requirements are the same for Arizona, Louisiana, Nevada and Utah:

- The contractor must be applying for a license in a classification that appears on that state's [Reciprocal Classifications List \(click here to view list\)](#);
- The contractor must have held an active license in good standing in one of the reciprocal states for the previous five years; and
- The contractor must submit to CSLB a [Request for Verification of License form \(click here to view form\)](#) that is completed by the licensing entity under which he or she already is licensed.

If you are granted reciprocity, CSLB may waive the trade exam. Each application is evaluated on a case-by-case basis. But, CSLB holds the right to require that exam. You still will be required to take the business law exam.

States without Reciprocity Agreements

For those states where reciprocity agreements aren't in-place, contractors must go through the traditional application process, which is outlined with information in the resource links below.

CSLB is also accepting requests to expedite applications for those planning to work in any of the state's disaster areas. To request an expedited application, please send an email to Licensing division Chief Justin Paddock at: justin.paddock@cslb.ca.gov ([click here to email Justin](#)). Your email must list the specific disaster area(s) where you plan to work. You should also include a copy of your email request with your application packet.

Enforcement

CSLB works with local and state partnering agencies to conduct regular sweeps and checks in the various fire zones around the state. As needed, undercover sting operations are also conducted, targeting those contracting without a license.

If you're caught contracting without a California license, you'll likely have to appear before a Superior Court judge to answer to misdemeanor charges that can carry a potential sentence of up to six months in jail and/or a \$5,000 fine, and/or an administrative fine of \$200 to \$15,000. If you continue contracting illegally, the penalties become more severe. A second conviction results in a mandatory 90-day jail sentence and a fine of 20 percent of the contract price or \$5,000.

If you illegally use another person's California contractor's license or try to mislead consumers into believing you are licensed in California, you can be charged with a felony. Also, anyone who contracts for work in a disaster area without an active California contractor license could face felony charges. If convicted of a felony, you may have to serve time in state prison.

You should also be aware that consumers are not legally required to pay a person who is not state-licensed, and if you don't have a California contractor license, you cannot sue a consumer for non-payment.

CSLB welcomes all qualified contractors from other states to come to California, get properly licensed, and help wildfire survivors rebuild their lives.

Resources

<i>English</i>	<i>Spanish</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>It Pays to Get Licensed</u> • <u>Steps to Becoming a Licensed Contractor</u> • <u>Summary of Acceptable Documentation to Verify Work Experience</u> • <u>Fingerprinting Requirements</u> <p><u>Preparing for the Exam</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Vale la pena obtener una licencia</u> • <u>Pasos para convertirse en un contratista con licencia</u> • <u>Resumen de documentos aceptados para verificar la experiencia laboral</u> • <u>Requisito de huellas digitales</u> <p><u>Preparación para el examen</u></p>

Learn more about becoming a California licensed contractor at www.cslb.ca.gov (click here to visit website), or by calling CSLB’s Licensing Information Center at (800) 321-CSLB (2752).