

## CONSTRUCTION PROJECT CHECKLIST

- Check the contractor license number at [cslb.ca.gov](http://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](http://cslb.ca.gov) • [CheckTheLicenseFirst.com](http://CheckTheLicenseFirst.com)

DEPARTMENT OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS

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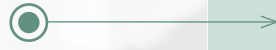
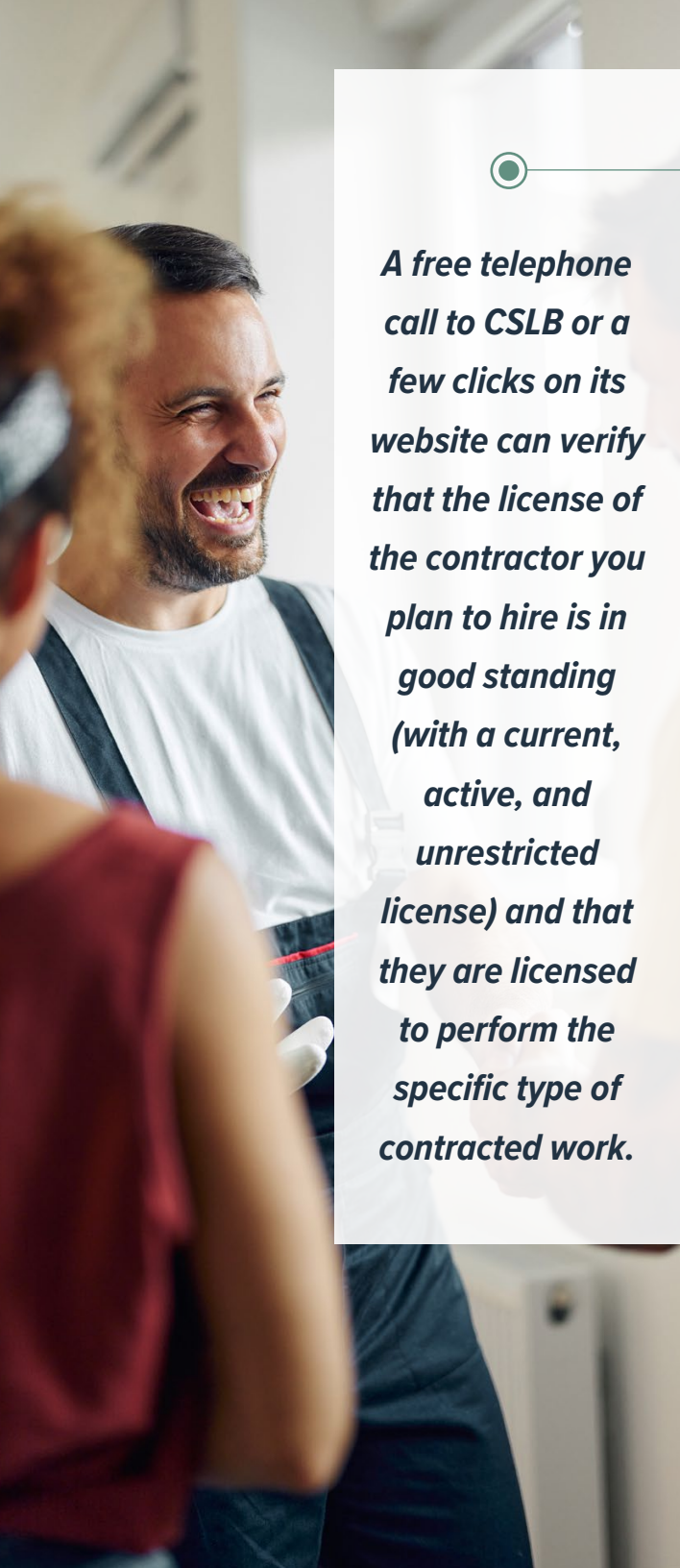
## WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW Before Hiring A Contractor



### 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