

News Release

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March 4, 2021

CSLB #21-01

Contractors State License Board Warns Consumers About the Dangerous Risks of Hiring Unlicensed Contractors

Contra Costa Co. District Attorney Files Felony Charges Against Unlicensed Contractor

SACRAMENTO – The Contractors State License Board ([CSLB](#)) is warning consumers about the dangers of hiring unlicensed contractors after felony charges were filed this week against an unlicensed contractor after the death of an employee. The [Contra Costa County District Attorney's Office](#) filed two felony charges against Segundo Collazos, the owner of Amazon's Landscaping Company based out of Concord.

The [charges](#) relate to the death of Manuel Peralta, then 68, of Antioch, who died while operating a tree stump grinder in 2018. At the time of the incident, Collazos had a suspended CSLB license. The license was suspended in August 2017 for [bond violations](#). Also, Collazos did not have a workers compensation insurance policy on file with CSLB.

CSLB wants to remind consumers to check the status of a contractor's license before hiring them.

"Many tragedies like this one in Concord can be prevented if consumers hire properly trained and CSLB licensed contractors, said CSLB Registrar David Fogt. "A simple check on the CSLB website can show whether a contractor is properly licensed and has workers compensation for employees."

Consumers can perform a "[License Check](#)" on the CSLB website with a search by a contractor's name, business name, or license number. In a matter of seconds, a contractor's individual license information is provided, which shows whether or not a license is active with CSLB. The license page also shows if a contractor has up-to-date workers compensation insurance for their workers. Workers' compensation insurance is required if the contractor has any employees. Homeowners can also use CSLB's "[Find My Licensed Contractor](#)" feature to build and download a list of qualified licensed contractors in their area.

In California, it's illegal for an unlicensed person to bid for or perform any home improvement valued at \$500 or more in combined labor and material costs. When hiring a contractor, consumers should also remember:

- Watch your down payment. The legal limit for a down payment is 10 percent of the contract price or \$1,000, whichever is lower.

- Avoid cash payments and keep copies of checks used to make payments.
- You should always get three bids from licensed contractors before hiring anyone to perform home improvement work.

The Contractors State License Board operates under the umbrella of the [California Department of Consumer Affairs](#). CSLB licenses and regulates almost 290,000 contractors in California and is regarded as one of the leading consumer protection agencies. In fiscal year 2019-2020, CSLB helped recover over \$58 million in ordered restitution for consumers.

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