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## Three Unlicensed Contractors Nabbed In Northern Nevada Stings

**Peyton Blaxton, dba Peyton's Home Weatherization & Repairs**, bragged to a NSCB investigator that he and a partner were excellent carpenters, but because of the downturn in the economy, they started a handyman business and advertised on a local Reno bulletin board that they could do: attic insulations and radiant heat moisture barriers, kitchen and bathroom remodeling, roof/wall water damage repairs, painting, etc.

Blaxton submitted a \$2,500 bid to paint a house and garage and was immediately served with a criminal citation for *contracting without a license*. The unlicensed contractors must of thought it was an April Fool's Day joke because they still asked the investigator if they could paint the house. Even telling the duo that the house was a sting house didn't faze them. They still wanted to paint it.

Blaxton did, kind of, evoke the spirit of Christmas prior to driving away. He told the investigator, "Happy (expletive) holidays!"

"Ho Ho Ho. And a Merry Christmas to you," the investigator thought to himself.

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**Michael W. Miller, dba Michael Miller Handyman Service**, listed on a Craigslist advertisement his handyman license and Nevada business license numbers. A lot of unlicensed contractors do this to imply that they are licensed Nevada contractors. But Miller doesn't have a Nevada State Contractors Board license, which is why he was issued a criminal citation for *contracting without a license*, after he submitted a \$2,500 painting bid to an undercover NSCB investigator. It didn't matter that he had 25-plus years experience. He can't do business without a valid NSCB license.

**Gerald P. Smith, dba Jerry the Painter**, was painting a house in Northwest Reno when an undercover NSCB investigator approached him. He was covered from head to toe with paint, including his hair. The windows on the home were also splattered with paint. Not a shining example of professional work, but the investigator asked for a bid, anyway, and Smith provided one for \$1,000. The unlicensed contractor was immediately issued a citation for *contracting without a license*.

"Do you just go around and ask people if they have a license?" Smith asked.

"Yes, we do," the investigator replied.

After a moment, Smith said, "I don't want to go through this again. I'm going to get my license."

The NSCB investigator gave Smith a contractor's license application and law book.

"Consumers should not be taken in by promises of cheap work performed by unlicensed contractors," said Margi Grein, Executive Officer of the NSCB. "Unlicensed contractors can cost consumers thousands of dollars. They carry no insurance, are not bonded and have not met any standards of the trade they may be performing.

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Enforcement stings conducted by the NSCB are helping to rid our neighborhoods of these unscrupulous people.”

Contracting without a license in Nevada is a misdemeanor for the first offense, a gross misdemeanor for the second offense and a Class E felony for the third offense.

Homeowners who use unlicensed contractors are not eligible for the Residential Recovery Fund, and by law their contracts are null and void.

**The NSCB urges consumers to follow these simple tips when dealing with a contractor:**

- **Hire only licensed contractors. Ask to see their NSCB license.**
- **Don't rush into decisions or hire someone without checking out potential contractors.**
- **Be especially wary when approached by someone offering door-to-door home improvements.**
- **Verify the contractor's license by checking online at: [www.nscb.state.nv.us](http://www.nscb.state.nv.us) or calling: (702) 486-1100 in Southern Nevada, or (775) 688-1141 in Northern Nevada.**
- **Ensure the contractor is properly licensed for the work you want done on your home.**
- **Limit your down payment or deposit to 10 percent of the total contract.**
- **Don't pay cash without obtaining signed receipts, and don't let the payments get ahead of the work.**

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