



NSCB News Release



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HEAD OFF HOLIDAY HASSLES WITH PLANNING, MAINTENANCE

HENDERSON, Nev. – Don't let a balky furnace or leaky toilet spoil your winter festivities. The Nevada State Contractors Board advises all homeowners to take care of routine home maintenance and existing minor repairs now to best prevent unnecessary stress during the holiday season.

Cold, wind, snow, ice and holiday entertaining place extra burdens on your home's heating, electrical, plumbing, roof and other systems. Now is the time to identify licensed contractors you can rely on. The holidays are stressful, and knowing in advance where to turn for repairs can help you avoid rip-offs, receive timely service, and potentially save money.

"Researching contractors for home repair emergencies may rank low on your holiday to-do list, but the proactive effort may prevent such unfortunate events from ruining your festive plans," noted NSCB Executive Officer Margi Grein. "Ask friends and family about contractors they have had good experiences with and call the Board or check our website to ensure the contractors' licenses are still valid and in good standing. Insisting on a contractor's license is your best defense against scams and poor workmanship."

The Board suggests you identify at least three roofing, plumbing, electrical, heating and air conditioning contractors you are confident will perform quality services at fair prices. Homeowners are encouraged to maintain a list of these contractors, including their name, contact information, and contractor's license number, which can be relied upon confidently in an emergency repair/maintenance situation.

State law requires that all heating, air conditioning, plumbing, refrigeration, or electrical service must be performed by licensed contractors. A license is also required for any project requiring a building permit and for any project totaling \$1,000 or more – including labor and materials.

Other winterizing areas homeowners may wish to discuss with their contractor, include:

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- **Plumbing** – Protect exposed pipes with foam sleeves or insulated tape and occasionally run water from all taps to prevent freezing.
- **Heating** – Ensure your heating systems are maintained and in good working order to avoid unnecessary breakdowns, increased costs, and potentially life-threatening gas leaks.
- **Roofs and gutters** – Freeze-thaw cycles can exacerbate roof leaks and clogged gutters can lead to water pouring over the eaves and settling next to home foundations and leaching into basements. Have your contractor check to make sure there are no missing roof shingles to best prevent major repair or damage to your home.
- **Fireplaces** – Make sure your wood-burning fireplace is free of creosote buildup, which is a fire hazard. For gas-burning appliances, a licensed contractor can check for leaks or buildup in the ventilation system.
- **Electrical outlets** – Have your electrical outlets checked to ensure they can withstand the added strain of Christmas lights, space heaters and kitchen appliances, which may cause tripped breakers and blown fuses.
- **Windows and doors** – Cracked glass or deteriorated weather stripping allow drafts and may increase heating bills.

NSCB encourages consumers to follow these guidelines when hiring a contractor:

1. Only hire licensed contractors.
2. Check the contractor's license number by utilizing our Online Contractor Search at www.nscb.nv.gov
3. Get at least three bids.
4. Obtain references and follow up with them on the quality and satisfaction of work performed.
5. Always get a written contract and do not sign anything until you completely understand the terms.
6. For pool contracts, pay 10 percent down or \$1,000 - whichever is less, if a deposit is required.
7. Don't let payments get ahead of the work. Keep a record of all payments.
8. Don't make a final payment until you are satisfied with the job.
9. Never pay with cash; only check or credit.
10. Keep a job file of all papers relating to your project.

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