



NSCB News Release



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CONTRACTORS BOARD CAUTIONS FIRE VICTIMS OF UNLICENSED CONTRACTORS

RENO, Nev. – The Nevada State Contractors Board urges northern Nevada residents whose homes have been damaged by the recent Little Valley Fire to remain vigilant against unlicensed and unscrupulous contractors. Verifying a contractor’s license number and using the NSCB’s resources can protect fire victims from becoming victimized again during the rebuilding phase.

NSCB urges Nevadans to hire only licensed contractors to ensure homeowners receive the full protections from the Board during the course of their project. Homeowners have up to four years from the date the work was performed to file a complaint with the Board if they experience workmanship issues. Additionally, a license provides additional checks on the contractor, such as passing appropriate trade and law exams, passing a background check, and validating the contractor’s financial wherewithal.

“In the wake of a devastating property loss, it is natural for homeowners to feel overwhelmed with the work that needs to be performed on their home to return their lives to normal,” NSCB Executive Officer Margi A. Grein explained. “However, it is these vulnerable times that homeowners can find themselves most at risk for being scammed. Therefore, we urge those affected to take a moment to verify contractor’s licenses and contact the Board with questions or for assistance during any phase of your contract negotiations or project.”

It is recommended homeowners first contact their homeowner’s insurance agent to file a claim and to best understand what repairs are covered and the timeline for repairs to be made to your home. Request a list of contractors your insurance provider uses and verify they are appropriately licensed on the Board’s website www.nscb.nv.gov or by contacting our office at 775-688-1141.

Any project valued at \$1,000 or more – including labor and materials – must be performed by a licensed Nevada contractor. In addition, any electrical, heating, air conditioning or plumbing project – regardless of value – requires a Nevada contractor licensed. State law requires all contractors to place their license numbers on all advertisements, proposals, contracts and vehicles.

It is natural to want to have repairs completed as quickly as possible, but the first concern must be residents’ personal safety. Fire can cause damage a home’s framing and roofing that is not readily apparent. Do not enter potentially hazardous areas, such as floors above damaged ceilings, until the home’s structural integrity can be professionally assessed. Homeowners also will want to engage

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crews to board up broken windows and holes burned into the home to secure the property from further damage from wind, weather, wildlife incursions, looting and vandalism.

Following a disaster, it is likely to see an influx of contractors, both licensed and unlicensed, driving through damaged neighborhoods speaking to homeowners and seeking home-repair projects. It is important to note that contractors with licensed companies in other states, such as California or Utah, who are not licensed in Nevada are considered unlicensed contractors in this state. Therefore, be cautious before entering into a contract for services and perform diligence in researching a company before hiring them.

When searching for a contractor to repair fire damage, the Contractors Board advises homeowners to take additional steps to protect themselves:

- Ask friends, family and neighbors for the names of contractors they have used and trust, but be sure to verify they maintain an active license by the Contractors Board.
- Insist on a written contract that details the work to be done, the exact materials to be used, start and completion dates, warranties and the amount and timing of payments.
- Be skeptical of unsolicited approaches for repair work, free inspections and great deals using leftover materials. Never make up-front payments and cash transactions.
- Never pay in cash or large down payments before work is performed.

To report unlicensed contracting activity, call the NSCB Hotline: 702-486-1160 or 775-850-7838.

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