



Nevada State Contractors Board
NEWS RELEASE

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NSCB Files Over 1000 Criminal Charges

NSCB Executive Officer, Margi Grein announces that the Nevada State Contractors Board (NSCB) has filed 1,067 criminal charges against unlicensed and unscrupulous contractors during the fiscal year ending June 30, 2005 doubling the total from the previous year. The increase follows the implementation of a new proactive approach, that has significantly contributed to 2,142 criminal complaints in the 2004-2005 fiscal year.

The Nevada State Contractors Board (NSCB) is tasked with promoting public confidence and trust in the competency and integrity of licensees and protecting the health, safety and welfare of the public, through licensing and regulation of all contractors in the State of Nevada. Proper licensing of the contractors ensures the public that the contractor has passed the appropriate law and trade examinations, has provided valid references of his abilities and has established his financial responsibility to engage in the construction business.

According to Director of Investigations, George J. Lyford, the success of current programs has been a joint effort. "The Board gave us the direction and resources and we were able to achieve this goal with the cooperation of licensed contractors, construction industry representatives, the various District Attorneys and through the hard work of an outstanding investigative staff."

Contracting without a license or engaging in construction fraud is a serious matter and is criminally prosecuted in the State of Nevada. The first offense is a Misdemeanor, the second a Gross Misdemeanor the third or subsequent offense is a Class E Felony.

The NSCB prosecutes contractors who operate without the proper licenses, perform poor workmanship, obtain money under false pretenses, divert money from the construction projects, and fail to carry workers compensation coverage, thus subjecting the homeowners to extensive liability for their illegal activities. However, population increases and the steady growth of the construction industry have resulted in more

cases being filed with the Board. These cases have become increasingly extensive and complex necessitating a more aggressive proactive approach.

Recognizing the growth-related issues, the NSCB added four (4) new investigators statewide. The newly strengthened Proactive Enforcement Unit pursues construction fraud by unlicensed and unscrupulous contractors. The new unit makes daily unannounced visits to the various construction sites and conducts undercover sting operations against unlicensed contractors. The unit also initiated a public awareness program for Senior Citizens and local Law Enforcement officers statewide, educating them about the illegal unlicensed contracting activity.

In addition to the new proactive programs, the NSCB has redirected existing resources and implemented a Business Review Program to assist contractors in complying with the law and to ensure that only properly licensed sub-contractors are working on the various construction projects. These proactive programs have been extremely successful and have resulted in the unprecedented number of criminal charges being filed by the Board during the past fiscal year.

The Nevada State Contractors Board provides consumers with the information needed to ensure that any contractor that they consider has a valid license in good standing. Consumers may also determine if a license has a history of complaints, is suspended, or is revoked.

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

- 1. Hire only licensed contractors. Ask to see the license.**
- 2. Don't rush into decisions or hire without checking out potential contractors.**
- 3. Be especially wary when approached by someone offering home improvements door-to-door.**
- 4. Verify the contractor's licensed by checking online at www.nscb.state.nv.us or via automated phone service at 702-486-1100 (Las Vegas) or 775-688-1141 (Reno).**
- 5. Ensure the contractor is properly licensed for the work you want done on your home.**
- 6. Limit the amount of your down payment or deposit to 10% of the total contract.**
- 7. Don't pay cash without obtaining signed receipts and don't let the payments get ahead of the work.**
- 8. Require lien releases from all contractors and sub-contractors as the work is completed and at the end of the project.**
- 9. Get at least three bids, check references, and get a written contract.**
- 10. Contact the NSCB if you have a complaint against a contractor.**