

Board extends military outreach

The Nevada State Contractors Board has made outreach and assistance to veterans of the U.S. armed forces a priority for 2014.

Because seniors often have family members in the service, as well as contacts in various social and community clubs, military service associations and other organizations that cater to military veterans, the Board is asking for your assistance in bringing this information forward. Staff members have identified a number of these agencies and will invite them to schedule visits from NSCB representatives to present information about the Board's services for newly discharged veterans and spouses of active-duty personnel.

During the current year, the Board intends to expand awareness of its Military Assistance Program, educate veterans about construction fraud schemes that target older Nevadans and inform veterans of the opportunities the construction industry offers as they transition from military to civilian occupations.

The Board also offers a Veterans Assistance Program for veterans transitioning into civilian employment and spouses of active-duty military who are relocating to Nevada with their service members. The NSCB recognizes that military spouses moving from state to state as their loved



ones are transferred face special challenges in obtaining licenses to perform their trades. And veterans sometimes find they do not receive proper credit for the work experience they gain in service to their country. The NSCB program offers several services to alleviate these challenges:

- A dedicated NSCB staff member who is specially trained to evaluate transferable military training and experience from all branches of the military that meet minimum licensing requirements;
- Consideration of military experience and training when the Board evaluates college credit to determine acceptable education levels for license applicants; and
- Evaluation of military spouses current records of licensure to determine whether he/she is eligible for waiver of certain experience requirements for licensure.

To determine eligibility or for questions concerning NSCB's expedited service for veterans and military spouses, contact License Analyst Barbara Miller at 775-850-7814 or email her at bamiller@nscb.state.nv.us.

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Home maintenance priorities change with the seasons

Even while making plans for Spring cleaning, it is important not to neglect home maintenance during the Winter.

Cold, wind, snow, ice and spending more time indoors places extra burden on your home's heating, electrical, plumbing, roof and other systems. Now is the time to identify licensed contractors you can rely on. Winter can be stressful, and knowing in advance where to turn for repairs can help you avoid rip-offs, receive timely service, and potentially save money.

"It's not easy to motivate yourself to research contractors for home repair emergencies, but a little foresight can prevent sleepless nights and maybe even real hardship," said NSCB Executive Officer Margi Grein. "Asking your friends and family for the names of contractors they have had good experiences with, and checking their license status and disciplinary history on the Board's website is the best way to guard 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.

Frozen water pipes are a particularly common and troublesome problem as temperatures fluctuate.

If it happens to you, shut off the main valve to your home (and on the water heater, if it is a hot-water pipe), and call a licensed plumber. All plumbing, as well as heating, air conditioning, refrigeration, and electrical work, must be performed by licensed contractors under Nevada law.

Plumbing industry experts have identified several precautions homeowners can take to avoid the mess, hassle and expense of broken water pipes this winter. Take these steps to minimize the risk:

- Disconnect gardening hoses and cover outside faucets.
- Keep your home heat on (at least 68 degrees) when you



leave on vacation.

- Open cabinet doors below sinks to allow heat from the home to circulate.
- Wrap pipes near exterior walls with pipe insulation or heating tape.
- Close windows and vents near water pipes.
- Heat your basement and consider weather sealing your windows.
- Insulate outside walls and unheated areas of your home.
- Allow a faucet to drip slightly (lukewarm water).
- Monitor faucet water flow and pressure. A reduction could point to a freeze.

Check licenses with our mobile app!

A new mobile application developed by the Nevada State Contractors Board makes verifying license information easier. The application, compatible with iPhone, iPad, iPod Touch and Android, is available as a free download.

With the application, users can search by business name, principal name, or license number to ensure a contractor maintains an appropriate Nevada contractor's license. Users can find disciplinary actions the Board has taken against licensed contractors during a specified time period or by

discipline type.

The mobile application can also be used to report unlicensed contracting activity.

To download the free application for Apple products, visit the iTunes site: <https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/nscb-mobile/id789876077?mt=8>. Usage requires iOS 5.1 or later. The app is optimized for iPhone 5.

For the Android application, go to Google Play: <https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.imd.nscb>.

Contact NSCB!

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Nevada State Contractors Board

MILITARY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

For veterans making the transition into civilian employment and spouses of active-duty military personnel relocating with their service members to Nevada

- A dedicated, specially trained NSCB staff member to evaluate transferable military training and experience from all branches of the military that meet minimum contractor licensing requirements.
- Military experience and training will be considered along with college credit when the Board evaluates acceptable technical education levels for license applicants.
- Military spouses' current records of licensure will be evaluated to determine whether he/she is eligible for waiver of certain experience requirements for licensure.



To determine eligibility or for questions concerning NSCB's expedited service for veterans and military spouses, contact License Analyst Barbara Miller at 775-850-7814 or 702-486-1100, extension 7814, or e-mail her at bamiller@nscb.state.nv.us

Take precautions to avoid falls

While it reports that one in three adults over 65 will suffer a fall this year, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention notes that most in-home falls can be prevented. Falls can be fatal among senior citizens, and they can cause severe injuries, such as head trauma, broken hips, spines, arms, hands and ankles. Once they suffer a fall – even if they are relatively uninjured – many people develop a fear of falling that may cause them to limit their activities. That can mean reduced mobility and loss of physical fitness, which in turn increases their actual risk of falling.

The CDC advises older citizens to exercise regularly to improve coordination. “It is important that the exercises focus on increasing leg strength and improving balance, and that they get more challenging over time. Tai Chi programs are especially good,” the Center’s [website](#) notes.

The National Fire Protection Association publication [Remembering When](#) contains several other tips for preventing falls:

- Take your time. Get out of chairs slowly. Sit a moment before you get out of your bed. Stand and get your balance before you walk. Be aware of your surroundings.

- Keep stairs and walking areas clear. Remove electrical



cords, shoes, clothing, books, magazines and other items that may be in the way of foot traffic.

- Improve the lighting in and outside your home. Use night lights or a flashlight to illuminate the path between your bedroom and the bathroom. Turn on the lights before using the stairs. See an eye specialist once a year—better vision can help prevent falls.

- Use non-slip mats. Non-slip mats increase safety in the bathtub and on shower floors. Have grab bars installed on the wall next to the bathtub, shower, and toilet. Wipe up spilled liquids immediately.

- Be aware of uneven surfaces. Make sure indoor flooring is safe. Use only throw rugs that have rubber, non-skid backing.

Consider non-skid pads under rugs. Always smooth out wrinkles and folds in carpeting. Be aware of uneven sidewalks and pavement outdoors. Ask a family member, a friend, or a neighbor to clear ice and snow from outdoor stairs and walkways. Always use hand rails, if available, and step carefully.

- Stairways should be well lit. Lighting from both the top and the bottom of stairways is important. Have easy-to-grip handrails installed along the full length on both sides of the stairs.

- Wear sturdy, well-fitting shoes. Low-heeled shoes with non-slip soles are best. These are safer than high heels, thick-soled athletic shoes, slippers, or stocking feet.