



# Senior Bulletin

August 2019

## Stay on top of home repair projects

As Nevadans age, it is especially important to remain diligent about home repairs. Loose tile or carpet, broken windows, faulty air conditioning, leaky roofs, and other home deficiencies can pose serious health and safety risks. The Nevada State Contractors Board recommends five easy steps you can take to better protect yourself.

### **1. Get a Written Estimate With Details**

Never say “yes” to have work done unless you have received a written estimate with a description of critical work details. Make sure that the estimate has the contractor’s name, address, and license number, and is signed and dated. Also, ask to include the proposed start and finish dates. It is recommended to obtain more than one bid for any project. This will help you make an informed decision and demonstrate if multiple contractors within the industry view the scope of work the same.

### **2. Make Sure the Contractor is Licensed**

Many home repair or remodeling services require a contractor’s license. This includes plumbing, electrical, heating and air conditioning, and refrigeration work. Additionally, any work valued over \$1,000 including labor and materials, or work that requires a building permit must be performed by a licensed Nevada contractor. It’s easy to check a contractor’s license status. Call the NSCB at (702) 486-1100 or (775) 688-1141; or visit the NSCB’s website [www.nscb.nv.gov](http://www.nscb.nv.gov) to verify the contractor’s license number.

### **3. Check The Contractor’s History**

Once you’ve pulled up your contractor’s license

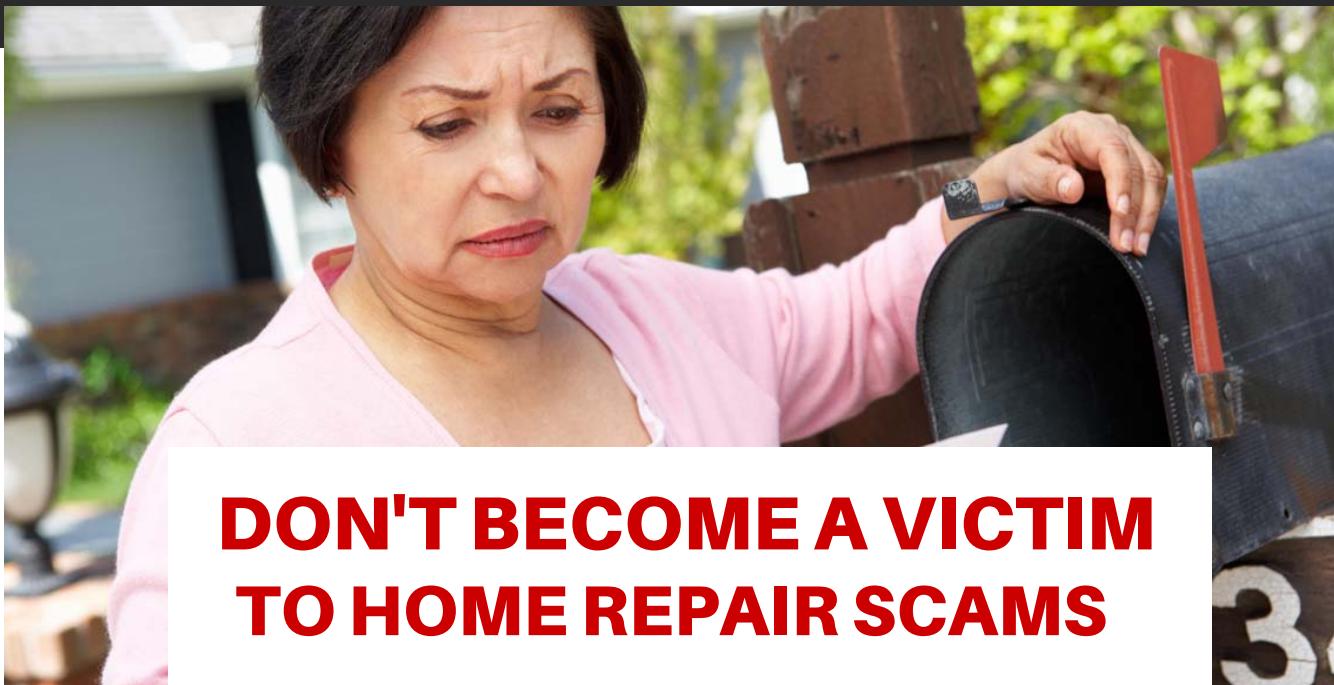
information, verify the license has an “Active” status and review any past disciplinary actions, which will be noted at the bottom of the screen. If there is discipline noted against the license that concerns you, talk with your contractor about it to determine if additional safeguards can be put into place for your project. How the contractor responds will help you determine if that person is someone you want to hire.

### **4. Ensure Payments Align with Work Performed**

The NSCB does not regulate costs within the industry, however, it does advise homeowners to not let payments get ahead of work performed. It is recommended down payments remain at 10% or \$1,000, whichever is less. Larger projects may require a payment schedule, while smaller projects can be paid upon completion of the job.

### **5. Free Assistance is Available if You Are Unsatisfied with Your Project**

If you have concerns with the workmanship performed or do not feel your contractor upheld the terms of your contract, you are encouraged to file a complaint with the NSCB before having another contractor make any repairs. Doing so allows the NSCB to investigate your concerns firsthand. If the Board validates issues during the investigation, the contractor will be ordered to remedy the validated items. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action and could afford you access to the Board’s Residential Recovery Fund. Complaint forms can be accessed online, or by contacting one of our offices directly.



# DON'T BECOME A VICTIM TO HOME REPAIR SCAMS

LEARN HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF



## Common Red Flags

### Door-to-Door Solicitations

Offers "Today Only" specials

### Verbal Agreements

Contractor refuses to put project terms into a written contract.

### High Pressure Sales

Won't take "no" for an answer; aggressive and intimidating communication.

### Cash Only Payments

Won't accept check or credit; offers "discount" for cash.

### Large Down Payments

Needs money upfront for materials; demands large amount before any work is performed.



## What You Can Do

### Verify the Contractor's License:

[www.nscb.nv.gov](http://www.nscb.nv.gov)

Ensure your contractor has an "Active" license status before signing a contract with them.

### Obtain At Least 3 Bids

Compare costs & ensure multiple contractors view the scope of work the same.

### Insist on a Written Contract

Ensure all project details, specific materials, and verbal agreements are documented.

### Pay with Check or Credit

Always get a receipt and make checks payable to the company you hired. Never pay with cash.



## Other Safety Precautions

### Protect Your Identity

Never carry your social security card or Medicare card in your wallet.

### Be Cautious of Phone Scams

Do not provide personal information or credit card details to someone over the phone.

### Have Unique Passwords

Use different passwords and user-names for various accounts

### Check Accuracy of Documents

Review your credit reports, financial documents, medical statements and billings regularly to ensure the information is correct.



# Recovery Fund awards over \$250,000

At its July 31 meeting, the Nevada State Contractors Board Residential Recovery Fund Subcommittee validated the claims of 23 homeowners, awarding them more than \$254,500 collectively, after it was determined they incurred financial harm after hiring licensed contractors to perform work on their homes.

"Hiring licensed Nevada contractors affords homeowners the opportunity to have their workmanship-related concerns investigated by the Board. This process allows the Board to identify options to remedy validated issues, which may include financial compensation through the Residential Recovery Fund," explained Nevada State Contractors Board Executive Officer Margi Grein. "Making someone whole again who took the time to be diligent in who they hired is truly the most rewarding and reflective outcome of our public safety mission."

Among those awarded

included homeowners who received \$34,308 after it was validated by the Board that cracking occurred in the concrete slabs installed by Esprit Construction. Board investigators determined the foundations were laid over improperly prepared or expansive soil. The contractor's license had been revoked following the owner's death.

Multiple complaints were also filed against five contractors. The subcommittee validated six claims against DHD Ready Renovation and Construction totaling \$73,881. The contractor's license was revoked in November 2018 for abandoning a construction project, failure to comply with the terms of a contract, permitting a business to be operated by an unlicensed person, substandard workmanship and other violations of Nevada's building laws.

Other companies against whom multiple claims were validated were Now Services,

dba Cool Air Now, Home Masters, Centrair Electric and Sky Canyon Roofing. The Board has revoked these contractors' licenses.

The Residential Recovery Fund Subcommittee meets at least once every two months to consider claims filed by Nevada owners of single-family residences who have hired a licensed contractor and incurred damages that could not be remedied during the investigative process. The Recovery Fund is supported solely by assessments paid by licensed residential contractors.

Over the past 20 years, the Recovery Fund has awarded more than \$12 million to harmed homeowners who have had workmanship or abandonment-related concerns with a residential construction project.

Homeowners have up to four years from the date work is performed to file a complaint with the Contractors Board.

## Measure Up...Use Licensed Contractors

**Southern Nevada**

**(702) 486-1100**

**Northern Nevada**

**(775) 688-1141**

**www.nscb.nv.gov**  
**Nevada State Contractors Board**



# NSCB seeks premises for stings

The Nevada State Contractors Board is seeking suitable locations for its unlicensed contractor sting operations. Homeowners, business owners and residential property developers interested in volunteering their sites can contact the Board's Director of Investigations, Paul Rozario.

"Stings not only protect the health and safety of the public from unqualified and sometimes dangerous people, they also protect the financial welfare of licensed contractors by removing illegal and unfair competition," NSCB Executive Officer Margi A. Grein said.

Investigators in the Contractors Board's Reno and Henderson offices conduct stings regularly throughout the state. Recently constructed homes



and vacant small business locations and offices are ideal locations for the undercover operations.

During a sting, investigators pose as property owners. They schedule appointments with suspected unlicensed individuals to visit the location and provide estimates for work including painting, floor covering, plumbing, electrical, and land-

scaping. It is illegal in Nevada to perform any construction or home-repair project valued at more than \$1,000 any plumbing, heating, electrical, HVAC work, regardless of cost, without a license. Evidence the Board collects from stings is turned over to district attorney's offices for criminal prosecution.

"Unlicensed contractors often do not carry workers compensation insurance and have not undergone the Board's extensive criminal background check. This puts consumers' finances and possibly their physical safety in jeopardy," Grein said. "In addition, home repair and improvement projects performed by unlicensed contractors takes millions of dollars away from legitimate contractors each year."

## Contact NSCB!

### Northern Nevada

5390 Kietzke Lane  
Suite 102  
Reno, NV 89511  
775-688-1141

### Southern Nevada

2310 Corporate Circle  
Suite 200  
Henderson, NV 89074  
702-486-1100

**[www.nscb.nv.gov](http://www.nscb.nv.gov)**