

News Release

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CSLB #14-30

Where There's Smoke, There's...Unlicensed Contracting *CSLB catches five in El Dorado County sting operation near King Fire staging area*

SACRAMENTO – Despite the distractions from operations connected with the nearby King Fire, [Contractors State License Board](http://www.cslb.ca.gov) (CSLB) investigators were able to smoke out five unlicensed contractors during an undercover sting operation in Placerville on September 22, 2014.

Members of CSLB's [Statewide Investigative Fraud Team](#) (SWIFT) used a commercial building near the El Dorado County Fairgrounds to stage the sting. The [El Dorado County District Attorney's Office](#) assisted in the operation.

The location turned out to be a busy one since it was being used to shelter pets affected by the massive fire. Unaware that an undercover sting was being conducted, several cat owners dropped in during the operation to check on their animals. In addition, the fairgrounds are being used as a staging area for firefighting operations, so access to the sting site was somewhat challenging.

SWIFT investigators, posing as building owners, called a list of potential suspects to solicit bids on landscaping, painting, and parking lot repairs. Bids ranged from \$800 to \$3,800 – well in excess of the \$500 legal limit. A CSLB-issued license is required for construction-related work exceeding that amount.

The five men cited for contracting without a license ([Business and Professions Code section 7028](#)) also face an additional misdemeanor charge for illegal advertising. State law ([Business and Professions Code section 7027.1](#)) requires contractors to place their license number in all print, broadcast, and online advertisements. Those without a license can advertise for jobs valued at less than \$500, but the ad must state that they are not a licensed contractor.

[CSLB Registrar Steve Sands](#) wasn't surprised that unlicensed contractors showed up at the busy sting property. "If there's money to be made, these operators will find a way to beat a path to your door," warned Sands. "Don't roll the dice. Check CSLB's website first to make sure the person you're considering is licensed."

Suspects must answer to illegal contracting charges in [El Dorado County Superior Court](#) at a location, date and time to be announced.

SUSPECT'S NAME CITY OF RESIDENCE	LICENSE CLASSIFICATION	ALLEGED VIOLATIONS
Mark Douglas Hansen <i>Placerville</i>	C33 – Painting and Decorating	Contracting without a license, Illegal advertising
Joshua Edward Robson <i>Placerville</i>	C33 – Painting and Decorating C27 – Landscaping	Contracting without a license, Illegal advertising
Jason Dean Terry <i>Rescue</i>	C33 – Painting and Decorating	Contracting without a license, Illegal advertising
Charles Bernardo Hernandez <i>Placerville</i>	C33 – Painting and Decorating	Contracting without a license, Illegal advertising
Jesus Rodriguez Martinez <i>Sacramento</i>	C33 – Painting and Decorating	Contracting without a license, Illegal advertising

CSLB encourages consumers to always “Check The License First” by visiting www.cslb.ca.gov or calling CSLB’s toll-free automated line: 800.321.CSLB (2757). Also, visit CSLB’s website for [tips](#) about how to hire a contractor and to sign up for [CSLB Email Alerts](#).

The Contractors State License Board operates under the umbrella of the [California Department of Consumer Affairs](#). CSLB licenses and regulates about 290,000 contractors in California, and is regarded as one of the leading consumer protection agencies in the United States. In fiscal year 2013-14, CSLB helped recover nearly \$51 million in ordered restitution for consumers.

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