

# News Release

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## **Contractors State License Board Urges Storm Victims to “Check the License First” Before Making Repairs**

*CSLB tips help prevent storm repairs from becoming costly headaches*

**SACRAMENTO** – The [Contractors State License Board](http://www.cslb.ca.gov) (CSLB) reminds California home owners to only use licensed contractors when it comes to storm damage repairs. The cheapest price may not be the best solution when it comes to repairing flood damage, removing a fallen tree, fixing a downed fence, or patching a leaky roof.

"Anyone who needs to make repairs from storm damage should be looking for a legitimate, qualified tradesperson – especially in an urgent situation," said CSLB Registrar Steve Sands. "Licensed contractors are skilled in their specific trade, insured and bonded, and not likely to leave you in the lurch when it comes to properly completing the job at a fair price."

Consumers can use CSLB's online resources, available at [www.cslb.ca.gov](http://www.cslb.ca.gov) or [CheckTheLicenseFirst.com](http://CheckTheLicenseFirst.com), to review the license status of a contractor they plan to hire, and to get tips about the best approach for making home repairs. Any construction job valued at \$500 or more in combined labor and material costs must be performed by a state-licensed contractor. California Business and Professions (B&P) Code requires licensees to carry workers' compensation insurance coverage for their employees, and to be bonded.

For tree trimming and removal jobs where the tree is 15 feet or higher and the job is more than \$500, the contractor must be state-licensed. B&P Code allows a gardener who does not have a state license to work on incidental tree pruning if the tree is less than 15 feet tall and the job costs less than \$500.

State law requires all C-39 Roofing contractors to carry workers' compensation insurance, even if they do not have employees, to ensure that consumers are protected in the event of an accident or injury on the homeowner's property.

Always follow these tips when soliciting bids from any home improvement contractor:

- Only hire licensed contractors, and ask to see the license and a photo identification.
- Don't rush into repairs no matter how badly they're needed.
- Be careful when using online bulletin boards like [craigslist.org](http://craigslist.org). Unlicensed operators may try to mislead you into thinking they are licensed.
- Only make a down payment of 10 percent or \$1,000, whichever is less.
- Don't pay in cash, and don't let payments get ahead of the work.
- Get at least three bids, check references, and get a written contract.
- Contact CSLB if you have a [complaint against a contractor](#).

CSLB encourages consumers to always "Check The License First" by visiting [www.cslb.ca.gov](http://www.cslb.ca.gov) or calling its toll-free automated line: 800.321.CSLB (2752). 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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