

## Hire Only Licensed Contractors

Beware of unlicensed, uninsured individuals who bid for your project. Those who operate without a license harm consumers each and every day. They tarnish the respectability of the construction industry and harm the state's financial situation by operating in the underground economy. Those who operate without a contractor license and proper insurances are doing business illegally. The California State Contractors Board targets these individuals. The CSLB has a State wide Investigative Fraud Team which conducts undercover sting and sweep operations on a weekly basis. If caught operating without a license, these individuals are charged with a misdemeanor, and face fines and eventually jail time. Those who operate using the license number of another contractor or who try to mislead consumers into believing that they are a licensed contractor are charged with a felony.

Consumers are put in jeopardy when they hire these unlicensed individuals. If they are caught by a sting in the middle of your project, you are left to start the process of finding a licensed, qualified contractor while your project is underway. These unlicensed individuals do not carry insurance which leaves you as the homeowner open to law suits. If one of these individuals is injured on your property, you can be held responsible for their medical bills and subject to a law suit. These individuals are not held to the same standards as licensed contractors. If they decide in the middle of your project that they do not want to continue, they can simply walk away. If their work is of poor quality or even done dangerously, you have no recourse. Many of the individuals who are operating illegally in the construction trade today are also undocumented and here in the country illegally. This makes it even easier for them to walk away from your project and impossible to find if they have done poor and dangerous work. They are able to change addresses and phone numbers, unlike a licensed contractor, who must complete the project as per the contract signed; these individuals are not bound by the laws of a licensed contractor. It may be tempting to hire someone who is unlicensed as they can provide a lower bid for your project. They are able to bid jobs for a lower cost as they are not operating legally and do not have the overhead costs of licenses, insurance and proper accounting procedures. While it may seem a good deal to hire the unlicensed, low bidder, consider the potential cost to you if one of them is injured while in your home. Your project could end up costing far more than if you hire the legal contractor whose bid was higher, not to mention the stress and anguish it could cause. The unlicensed, injured worker could end up owning your home. Rick Lopes, public affairs officer for the Contractors State License Board in California says; "Consumers can suffer serious financial consequences."

Remember, "you get what you pay for" is as true as the first time uttered. Hire only licensed, insured contractors for your own protection. And, if you want a quality job done by craftsmen who are integral and accountable, call **Tiger Construction & Home Improvement, Inc.**