



**State of New Jersey
Department of Community Affairs
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**Jon S. Corzine
Governor**

**Joseph V. Doria, Jr.
Commissioner**

Licensed Professional Contractors

The Division of Codes and Standards has had several meetings with the New Jersey State League of Master Plumbers concerning the enforcement of plumbing licenses and all the professional licensed trades. The League has asked us to provide guidance to Code Officials concerning unlicensed individuals working under the Uniform Construction Code. This occurs more often than not, specifically relating to homeowners doing their own work. Many homeowners are persuaded by an unskilled handyman that it would be too costly to hire a licensed professional.

The reality is that the handyman has no formal training, has not passed tests, and does not attend update seminars. He may not have insurance and, generally speaking, does not provide the homeowner with a contract. If the homeowner has a problem with the handyman (who, once on the job, may not be very handy), there is no State agency to turn to for assistance. Hiring a licensed professional protects the homeowner and, in the long run, may save money because the quality of work is superior.

How can homeowners be helped when confronting this situation?

- If a homeowner states that he or she is going to do their own plumbing, and/or electrical work, make sure that they understand that they must actually perform the work and may not simply supervise it.

Make sure that the homeowner signs and dates the certification. Explain that the homeowner is accepting full responsibility for any violation that may be uncovered, but that hiring a licensed professional shifts that responsibility onto the contractor.

What if we discover unlicensed contractors working on a construction site?

- Issue a Stop Work Order. This is our tool to gain compliance. Once the job is stopped, the general contractor or homeowner will be sure to have a licensed professional on the job site.
- Report the unlicensed contractor to the appropriate Division of Consumer Affairs' Licensing Board. Make sure the complaint is in writing. Do not just pick up the phone and call; action will not be taken based on just a phone call.

Finally, once a year, every building department should request a copy of the current license from each contractor. This will not only prevent issuing permits to a contractor whose license has expired, it will also help to curb the use of false documents, including falsified raised seals.

If you have any questions, please contact me at (609) 984-7672.

**LOUIS J. MRAW
SUPERVISOR, OFFICE OF REGULATORY AFFAIRS**