

## Value of License

In obtaining a Landscape Contracting Business license a business has agreed to submit themselves to regulation that requires a higher standard of business operation. This license provides the consumer with some very specific protections. This includes, but is not limited to:

- A surety bond which allows a consumer recourse if there is a breach of contract; negligent or improper work or if there are other instances that cause damage to the consumer.
- Liability insurance that provides protection to the consumer's property if damage occurs during the construction phase of the project.
- A Landscape Construction Professional directly supervising the landscaping work performed who has demonstrated through examination and experience a minimum level of competency to perform and supervise the work.
- A dispute resolution process administered by the board that attempt to keep the consumer and the landscape contracting out of court thus saving both parties of the dispute stress and legal costs associated with lawyers and courts.
- Workers Compensation Insurance which protects the employee and frees the consumer from responsibility in the event there is an injury on the work site.

As a consumer, when you contract with a licensed landscape contracting business you can be confident that you have a higher level of protection of your investment in your landscape project.

A licensed business that follows all the laws that govern landscaping work in Oregon including employment, workers compensation and department of revenue contributes to the betterment of living in Oregon.

## MISSION

The Landscape Contractors Board regulates the landscape construction industry in Oregon for the protection of the public interest and to promote a fair and competitive business environment through education, licensing, dispute resolution and enforcement.

Oregon Landscape Contractors Board

[www.lcb.state.or.us](http://www.lcb.state.or.us)

2111 Front St. NE, Suite 2-101

Salem, OR 97301

503-967-6291 phone

503-967-6298 fax



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## WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW



A Consumer Guide When Contracting for Landscape Construction Work

## How to Check for a License

- **Use the Website:**
  - [www.lcb.state.or.us](http://www.lcb.state.or.us)

Go to the LCB website: and click on “check a license”. There are multiple ways to search but unless you have the license number it is best to enter only known spellings. **Less is better** and it will broaden the search.

The search will only return active landscape contracting business licenses and will provide the bond amount, the insurance coverage and the name of the Landscape Construction Professional that is to supervise the landscaping work.

- **Call the LCB office**

The staff will provide you with the information regarding the license.

You can have a beautiful landscape and avoid problems if you take the time to check references, licenses and make sure there is a well written contract.

*Remember: What is said today may be forgotten tomorrow. Put it in WRITING!*



## How to Avoid Common Problems

- **Use a written contract.** All landscape projects require, by law, a written contract. This protects you and the landscape contracting business in case of a dispute. One of the biggest causes of problems in the landscaping industry is lack of a contract, a poorly written contract or a contract that has not been read. Put all agreements in writing.
- **Plan your project carefully.** Making a plan or is important for visualization of the project and for determining your expectations. Talk about money and always consider your budget when planning. Study your plans carefully, walk through the project and approve the plans in writing before work begins.
- **Develop a list of potential landscape contracting businesses.** Ask friends, neighbors, relatives and co-workers who they have used and would recommend from their experience.
- **Get two or more written.** Make sure you understand the differences in the bid elements and the price variations in the bids. Be careful of “low” bids, “special deals” or a “great deal from a friend of a friend”. A higher bid may be worth the price in better materials, workmanship and reliability.
- **Pay in Installments.** Legitimate contractors are entitled to a down-payment to “cement” the contract. Usually this is from a 25 to 35% of the total contract price. It is important to find the “balance” where the landscape contracting business has enough money to buy the materials necessary to start the project but you retain enough money to ensure satisfactory completion. Do not let your payments get ahead of the work completed. You can request invoices from your contractor that determine the percentage completion on a job which allows you to determine the progress of the project. Make your final payment when the job is complete, all suppliers and subcontractors are paid and you are satisfied with the work.
- **Avoid Liens.** Homeowners are ultimately responsible for payments to subcontractors and suppliers even if they have paid their licensed landscape contracting business in full. Do not let your landscaping start until you receive an “Information Notice to Owner about Construction Liens”. This explains liens and how to protect yourself. Read it carefully and follow its advice.
- **Keep good written records.** Keep a log of conversations, copies of correspondence, cancelled checks, the contract, change orders and receipts. If problems arise you will have them documented.
- **Communicate.** Do not be afraid to talk to the business owner or landscape construction professional during the project. Most problems arise between clients and contractors because of lack of communication. If the contractor refuses to return calls,