

16 contractors caught in South Shore sting

The California Contractors State License Board (CSLB) teamed with the Nevada State Contractors Board (NCSB) on two undercover sting operations, as well as a sweep of job sites in the South Lake Tahoe area that snared 16 unlicensed contractors.

NCSB staff were on-site at CSLB's sting in South Lake Tahoe on May 16. CSLB staff joined NCSB for their sting the following day in Zephyr Cove. Investigators posed as a homeowner and solicited home improvement bids from alleged unlicensed contractors.

In the California sting, 10 people were caught and now face a misdemeanor charge of contracting without a state license. Bids ranged from \$1,100 for tile to \$20,000 for installation of concrete pavers. It is against California law to contract for home improvement or construction jobs valued at \$500 or more for labor and materials combined without a state-issued contractor license. Penalties for first-time unlicensed contracting convictions include up to six months in jail and/or up to \$5,000 in fines.

Eight of the 10 suspects were also given a notice to appear in court for illegal advertising. California contracting law requires unlicensed contractors to state in all advertising that they are not licensed.

Three of the 10 brought workers with them to the sting house and were given stop orders and cited for not having workers' compensation insurance for those workers; two of the 10 could face charge for requesting an illegally large down payment. In California, down payments for home improvement jobs cannot total more than \$1,000 or 10 percent of the contract price,

whichever amount is less.

Investigators also swept through 31 jobs sites in the South Lake Tahoe area. The sweep will result in three cases being referred to the El Dorado County District Attorney's Office. Two will be referred for contracting without a license; the third for a worker's compensation insurance violation. Three stop orders and one administrative citation also were issued.

Six people were caught in the Nevada sting. Four were cited for contracting without a license; two of those were also cited for advertising without a license. Two others were cited only for advertising without a license.

A Nevada state contractor's license is needed for all home improvement jobs that exceed \$1,000 in labor and material, require a building permit, involve plumbing, electrical, heating or air conditioning, or changes the aesthetic appearance or structural components of a building or property grounds.

The two states also have a reciprocity agreement, making it easier for a contractor licensed in one state, to get a contractor's license in the other.

The suspects listed below, who were caught in the California sting, are scheduled to appear on July 18 in El Dorado County Superior Court in South Lake Tahoe.

California Sting Operation

Suspect name City of residence	License classification	Alleged violation(s)
Andrew James Davis Carson City	C-15 Flooring Contractor	Contracting w/o a License Illegal Advertising

Symon Cleonvernier Sears Carson City	C-15 Flooring Contractor	Contracting w/o a License Illegal Advertising
Eduardo Martinezf-Medina Sparks	C-54 Tile Contractor	Contracting w/o a License Illegal Advertising
Carlos Romero Sun Valley	C-61/D-6 Concrete Related Services Contractor	Contracting w/o a License Illegal Advertising
Frank Anthony Euronis Reno	C-13 Fencing Contractor	Contracting w/o a License No Workers' Compensation Insurance
Shawn Brown South Lake Tahoe	C-13 Fencing Contractor	Contracting w/o a License
Alberto Ruiz- Lopez Carson City	C-61/D-6 Concrete Related Services Contractor	Contracting w/o a License Illegal Advertising Illegally Large Down Payment No Workers' Compensation Insurance
James Raymond Williams III South Lake Tahoe	C-33 Painting Contractor	Contracting w/o a License Illegal Advertising No Workers' Compensation Insurance

Steven Anthony Nichols South Lake Tahoe	C-61/D-49 Tree Service Contractor	Contracting w/o a License Illegal Advertising
Leo James Pasquarello Sparks	C-61/D-6 Concrete Related Services Contractor	Contracting w/o a License Illegal Advertising Illegally Large Down Payment

Nevada Sting Operation

Suspect name City of residence	Work class	Alleged violation(s)
Alberto Ruiz-Lopez Carson City	Multiple	Advertising w/o a License
Rigoberto Gonzalez Incline Village	Painting	Contracting w/o a License
Javier Tinoco Incline Village	Painting	Contracting w/o a License
Elmer Vazquez Sparks	Painting	Contracting w/o a License Advertising w/o a License
Steven Rose Carson City	Painting	Advertising w/o a License
Gershon BenChaim Reno/Sparks	Garage Door	Contracting w/o a License Advertising w/o a License