

# California Contractors State License Board & Kern County District Attorney's Office



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CSLB #19-56

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## **CSLB Partners with Kern County District Attorney's Office to Catch Unlicensed Contractors**

*Sting Catches Registered Sex Offender Working as Alleged Unlicensed Contractor*

**SACRAMENTO** – Homeowners take a big risk when inviting an unlicensed contractor into their homes. The most recent example of this is when one of 16 alleged unlicensed contractors cited in a December 10-11, 2019 undercover sting operation in Bakersfield conducted by the Contractors State License Board ([CSLB](#)) and the [Kern County District Attorney's Office](#) was a registered sex offender.

All applicants for a state-issued contractor license must submit fingerprints and undergo a criminal background check before CSLB will issued a license. "Consumers need to be careful about who they allow into their home," said CSLB Registrar David Fogt. "Some try to work without a license because they know they won't pass our criminal background check."

The 16 suspects could now face a misdemeanor charge of contracting without a license ([Business and Professions Code \(BPC\) §7028](#)). First-conviction penalties include up to six months in jail and/or up to \$5,000 in fines. In California, it's illegal for an unlicensed person to bid for or perform any home improvement valued at \$500 or more in combined labor and material costs.

“Proactive enforcement of contractor licensing requirements protects consumers and businesses alike. Consumers are protected from illegal contracts and poor workmanship, and law-abiding contractors are protected from unfair competition by any who attempt to avoid the law’s requirements,” said Kern County District Attorney Cynthia Zimmer.

Consumers can check a contractor’s license status by conducting an [“Instant License Check”](#) in a matter of seconds on CSLB’s website by typing in the contractor’s license number, name, or business name. The search results reveal whether or not the contractor’s license is active and/or in good standing.

Homeowners can also use CSLB’s [Find My Licensed Contractor](#) feature to build and download a list of qualified licensed contractors in their area.

In the Bakersfield operation, CSLB Statewide Investigative Fraud Team ([SWIFT](#)) members posed as owners of a four-bedroom residence, and invited alleged unlicensed contractors to place bids on home improvement work.

Over the two-day period, alleged unlicensed contractors showed-up to give undercover investigators bids for jobs including flooring, fencing, pavers, and painting.

Ten suspects did not have workers’ compensation insurance policies to cover those working for them, and were cited ([Labor Code section 3700.5](#)) As a reminder, licensed contractors should carry workers’ compensation insurance if they have employees. Without insurance, homeowners could be liable if an employee gets hurt on their property.

If contractors don’t have employees, they must file a workers’ compensation exemption with CSLB, which is noted on the license record. The exception is for roofing contractors, who must carry workers’ compensation insurance, whether they work solo or have employees (who also must be covered).

Fourteen individuals could face an additional misdemeanor charge for their illegal advertisements. Licensed contractors must display their license number in all advertisements; unlicensed contractors must state in all ads that they do not have a license ([BPC §7027.1](#)). The penalty for violating the advertising rules for unlicensed contractors is a fine of \$700 to \$1,000.

All suspects were ordered to appear in court on February 11 or February 13, 2020, at 8:30 a.m. at the Kern County Superior Court, 1215 Truxtun Avenue, Bakersfield, CA 93301 ([MAP](#)).

**NOTE: All suspects are presumed innocent until their case is resolved.**

**BAKERSFIELD DAY 1 – DECEMBER 10, 2019**

| <b>SUSPECT NAME<br/>CITY OF RESIDENCE</b>          | <b>LICENSE<br/>CLASSIFICATION</b>          | <b>ALLEGED<br/>VIOLATIONS</b>                                                        |
|----------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Jose Luis Ayala-Vazquez<br><i>Bakersfield</i>      | C-33 Painting and<br>Decorating Contractor | Contracting without a license, Illegal<br>advertising, No Workers' Comp<br>Insurance |
| Eder Eligio Velazquez<br>Peralta<br><i>Ontario</i> | C-33 Painting and<br>Decorating Contractor | Contracting without a license, Illegal<br>advertising, No Workers' Comp<br>Insurance |
| Gerardo Campos Amador<br><i>Bakersfield</i>        | C-23 Ornamental Metal<br>Contractor        | Contracting without a license, Illegal<br>advertising, No Workers' Comp<br>Insurance |
| Byron Rodolfo Alvarado<br><i>Bakersfield</i>       | C-54 Ceramic and<br>Mosaic Tile Contractor | Contracting without a license, Illegal<br>advertising, No Workers' Comp<br>Insurance |
| Eric Anthony<br><i>Bakersfield</i>                 | C-54 Ceramic and<br>Mosaic Tile Contractor | Contracting without a license, Illegal<br>advertising                                |
| Maurice Legree<br><i>Bakersfield</i>               | C-33 Painting and<br>Decorating Contractor | Contracting without a license, Illegal<br>advertising                                |
| Alejandro Guzman Tapia<br><i>Arvin</i>             | C-33 Painting and<br>Decorating Contractor | Contracting without a license, Illegal<br>advertising                                |
| Victor Farias Jr.<br><i>Bakersfield</i>            | C-33 Painting and<br>Decorating Contractor | Contracting without a license                                                        |

**BAKERSFIELD DAY 2 – DECEMBER 11, 2019**

| <b>SUSPECT NAME<br/>CITY OF RESIDENCE</b>            | <b>LICENSE<br/>CLASSIFICATION</b>          | <b>ALLEGED<br/>VIOLATIONS</b>                                                        |
|------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Theodore William<br>Forzetting<br><i>Bakersfield</i> | C-54 Ceramic and Mosaic<br>Tile Contractor | Contracting without a license                                                        |
| Ryan Paul Lucero<br><i>Bakersfield</i>               | C-33 Painting and<br>Decorating Contractor | Contracting without a license,<br>Illegal advertising, No Workers'<br>Comp Insurance |

|                                                         |                                            |                                                                                      |
|---------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Luis Enrique Diaz Guillen<br><i>Bakersfield</i>         | C-33 Painting and<br>Decorating Contractor | Contracting without a license,<br>Illegal advertising, No Workers'<br>Comp Insurance |
| Jose Luis Tevelan Mejia<br><i>Bakersfield</i>           | C-33 Painting and<br>Decorating Contractor | Contracting without a license,<br>Illegal advertising, No Workers'<br>Comp Insurance |
| Daniel Benedict Cerna<br><i>Bakersfield</i>             | C-33 Painting and<br>Decorating Contractor | Contracting without a license,<br>Illegal advertising, No Workers'<br>Comp Insurance |
| Francisco Javier Aguilar-<br>Diaz<br><i>Bakersfield</i> | C13 – Fencing Contractor                   | Contracting without a license,<br>Illegal advertising, No Workers'<br>Comp Insurance |
| Raymond Richard Parks Jr<br><i>Bakersfield</i>          | C-33 Painting and<br>Decorating Contractor | Contracting without a license,<br>Illegal advertising, No Workers'<br>Comp Insurance |
| Tony Choate<br><i>Bakersfield</i>                       | C-29 Masonry Contractor                    | Contracting without a license,<br>Illegal advertising                                |

The Contractors State License Board operates under the umbrella of the [California Department of Consumer Affairs](#). CSLB licenses and regulates more than 285,000 contractors in California and is regarded as one of the leading consumer protection agencies in the United States. In fiscal year 2018-2019, CSLB helped recover over \$49 million in ordered restitution for consumers.

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