



Paradise Valley Police Department CRIME PREVENTION BULLETIN

August 2019

The Paradise Valley Police Department is providing this bulletin to keep residents informed on joint successes collaborating with our community.

OUR MISSION:

Provide high-quality police services to our community, reduce crime and the fear of crime, and by working with all citizens, to preserve life, protect property, promote individual responsibility and encourage community involvement.

Questions?

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Arizona Registrar of Contractors Reminds



Paradise Valley Homeowners to Hire Licensed Contractors

Written by Jessie Winter, Public Information Liaison, of Arizona Registrar of Contractors

How big of a problem is unlicensed contracting in Paradise Valley?

Since the beginning of 2015, Arizona Registrar of Contractors (AZ ROC) received and investigated 40 unlicensed complaints from Paradise Valley property owners alone.

These homeowner complaints allege that unlicensed entities contracted for projects totaling well over \$1.7 million and were actually paid over \$1.5 million for those projects. In exchange, the homeowners received poor workmanship and/or complete job abandonment. Sadly, since not every victim files a complaint, those totals are likely far greater than were substantiated through ROC investigations.

AZ ROC serves to promote quality construction by licensing contracting companies in Arizona and investigating complaints against licensed and unlicensed entities. When investigating unlicensed complaints, however, AZ ROC cannot recover damages for homeowners and the Agency will typically first seek compliance from the unlicensed individual, i.e. encourage them to become licensed, if no damage occurred. There are, however, consequences for bad actors and those who damage properties or take money and perform no work, including assessments of civil penalties and, in some cases, jail time.

Of the 40 Paradise Valley cases, 12 were served cease and desist letters and 16 were submitted for criminal prosecution which resulted in over \$40,000 of restitution, nearly \$6000 in fines, 8 years of probation, 40 hours of community restitution, and 5 years in the custody of the Department of Corrections. The re-



maining 12 cases either lacked sufficient evidence, were outside of AZ ROC's jurisdiction, or were closed for other similar reasons.

Statewide, the Agency receives and investigates an average of about 2,500 complaints each year related to unlicensed contracting, or Contracting Without a License, which is a Class 1 Misdemeanor.

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What to watch out for?

A common type of complaint involves an unlicensed entity claiming a license was not required for the project because they are working under a “handyman exemption.” There is no handyman

exemption. When hiring someone else to do the work, a contractor’s license is mandatory whenever the total cost of the project is over \$1,000, including all labor and materials, or whenever the project requires a permit by the local municipality, regardless of the price.

AZ ROC also warns homeowners to avoid door-to-door scammers who claim to be able to offer low prices because of extra materials left over from another project. The results of these scams are often inferior workmanship and greater costs for the consumer because someone else will need to be hired to correct the shoddy work.

Why are licensed contractors the better choice?

The Registrar only issues licenses to those who qualify for them. The application process is thorough and reviews all of the following:

- Relevant experience history and industry knowledge
- Workers’ compensation insurance
- A bond with appropriate coverage
- Criminal background history
- Complaint history

If a problem does occur when using a



licensed contractor, such as if workmanship is below standard or is in violation of existing codes, a residential property owner has significant protections not available to persons hiring an unlicensed entity which include:

- Administrative Resolution Process: a complaint can be filed against the contractor's license within two-years from the date of occupancy or date the last work was performed.
- Residential Contractors' Recovery Fund: under certain conditions and depending

on the cost of damages, homeowners can receive up to \$30,000 to have the work corrected or completed.

Statewide as of June 26, 2019, AZ ROC has paid out nearly \$1,022,000 from the Recovery Fund, with an average of \$14,500 paid to homeowners in Paradise Valley alone. Although these homeowners were negatively impacted by poor workmanship and/or job abandonment, the sensible precautions they took in hiring licensed contractors enabled the Registrar to assist them in getting recovery.

How do I find licensed contractors in my area?

AZ ROC reminds property owners to always ask contractors of their license status and to actually verify the license using the contractor search tool at www.roc.az.gov or by giving the Agency a call at 1-877-692-9762.



Residents can sign up to use our Code Red system to receive alert notifications from the Paradise Valley Police Department by the means of a text message, an email, or automated phone call.

There are two notification settings. First is our general information such as upcoming community events. The second is strictly for emergency notifications. Our residents can opt to receive one or both alert types.

Signup on website today at www.ParadiseValleyPD.com



Paradise Valley Police Station

6433 E Lincoln Dr.
Paradise Valley, Arizona 85253
Dispatch Center: (480)948-7410
Emergency Calls: 911



ParadiseValleyPD.com



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Its easy to stay connected by joining our Constant Contact email list! Simply send your email address by text message. Text **PVPD** to 22828 to get started. Standard message and data rates may apply.