

SAMPLE NEWSLETTER ARTICLE

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- Safeguarding Our Communities by Reporting Unlicensed Activity in Florida
- The High Cost of Unlicensed Contracting: Why Your Help Makes a Difference
- Help Us Combat Unlicensed Activity: A Call to Action

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A fly-by-night roofing contractor skips town with an elderly couple's only savings. A handy man's shortcut leads to thousands of dollars in damage. An unlicensed electrician's lack of knowledge causes a fire and a tragic loss of life. Although these anecdotes represent only a few of the outcomes of unlicensed contracting work, they serve as powerful reminders of the risks posed by individuals who operate without proper credentials.

Unlicensed activity in the State of Florida result in millions in damages each year, harming residents, lowering property values and creating safety hazards and liabilities that may not discovered for years to come. However, the cost cannot only be counted in dollars and cents. It also fractures the public's trust, undermines the confidence people put in our industry and effectively steals work from those of us who've done the hard work to get and maintain our professional license.

The Florida Department of Business and Professional Regulation (DBPR) works tirelessly each year to identify these bad actors and hold them accountable and we're proud to partner with them to support their efforts by encouraging our members to report unlicensed activity.

As professionals with firsthand knowledge of the standards and qualifications necessary for quality work, we're in a unique position to identify potential cases of unlicensed activity and encourage consumers who have been victimized by these bad actors to make a report. By promptly reporting such instances to the DBPR and encouraging others to do so, we actively contribute to protecting our communities and safeguarding the integrity of our profession.

If you encounter someone that you suspect may be performing unlicensed activities, we encourage you to report it online at MyFloridaLicense.com or call the Unlicensed Activity Hotline at 866.532.1440. Equally as important, we'd encourage you to also share this information with others you feel may have been taken advantage of so that they can file a report as well.

Working together with DBPR to report unlicensed activities, we can help reduce the number of unscrupulous individuals operating in our industry and build safer, more prosperous communities for all Floridians.

REPORTING UNLICENSED ACTIVITY BRINGS A CRIMINAL TO JUSTICE

Between 2022 and 2023, DBPR's received several reports of unlicensed activity occurring in Duval and St. Johns counties. DBPR's Jacksonville Regional Office investigated the complaints and worked closely with the Department of Financial Services' Insurance Fraud Division to pursue criminal charges against Steven Darby Ford.

In Duval County, Ford was found guilty of Felony False Representation as a licensed contractor, along with Organized Fraud and Failure to Secure Workers' Compensation and sentenced to five years in prison, to be served concurrently with a seven-year sentence for fraud. Additionally, he was ordered to pay restitution totaling \$289,079.25.