

# UNLICENSED ACTIVITY

## TOOLKIT FOR CONTRACTORS



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Inside you'll find tools, information and resources to educate your stakeholders about the impact of unlicensed activities in the Sunshine State. These tools will help you encourage them to protect the public and the future of the construction industry by reporting unlicensed activity in the State of Florida.

**THE UNLICENSED ACTIVITY PROGRAM  
WITHIN THE DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS AND  
PROFESSIONAL REGULATION EXISTS TO**

**PROTECT THE CITIZENS OF THE STATE OF FLORIDA BY  
EMPOWERING THEM TO RECOGNIZE THE DANGER OF  
UNLICENSED ACTIVITY AND INVESTIGATE COMPLAINTS  
FILED AGAINST UNLICENSED INDIVIDUALS.**



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# LETTER FROM THE SECRETARY



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TOOLKIT'S ASSETS



To our valued partners,

As the Secretary of the Florida Department of Business and Professional Regulation (DBPR), I have the distinct honor and privilege of working alongside the dedicated men and women that form the backbone of our state's economy. The result of your hard work can be seen in every corner of our state – from providing safe, affordable housing for Florida's families, to contributing more than \$75 billion to our state's economy – Florida's construction industry plays a vital role in our state's success and is one of the reasons Florida can boast having the fifteenth largest economy in the world.

DBPR is proud to support our construction industry professionals in a variety of ways, including actively seeking commonsense solutions that cut red tape and make it easier to do business. DBPR is committed to supporting Florida's construction industry through our Unlicensed Activity Program, which proactively seeks out bad actors who put our most vulnerable citizens at risk and helps hold them accountable.

Unlicensed activity poses a significant threat to the safety of our residents, the integrity of the construction industry and the trust placed in your profession. To combat unlicensed activity, we have taken several critical steps:

- **Streamlined reporting:** We've made it easier than ever to report unlicensed activity online, over the phone or on-the-go with our mobile app, empowering both industry professionals and consumers to join our fight.
- **Invested in our team:** Over the last five years, we've invested approximately \$6 million in investigating each tip we receive. Additionally, DBPR has grown its team to 50 investigators located at ten regional offices throughout the state to expedite our investigations process.
- **Full prosecution:** Under the steadfast leadership of Governor DeSantis, we are continuing to work towards our goal of holding offenders accountable and work hand-in-hand with the Attorney General's office to prosecute those committing unlicensed activity to the fullest extent of the law.

However, we cannot do this alone – we need the full support of our public and private partners to effectively target unlicensed activity. Our investigators rely on receiving credible tips and your stakeholders are uniquely positioned to witness and report unlicensed activity. Thank you for joining us in this critical effort by encouraging members of the construction industry to report unlicensed activity. To help you get started, we've developed the resources in this toolkit to help you get the message out.

On behalf of DBPR and the 20+ million residents who live in the great State of Florida, thank you for your steadfast commitment to ensuring Florida remains the best state in our nation to call home. Together, we will continue to protect the integrity of the construction industry and build a brighter future for all Floridians.

Sincerely,

Melanie S. Griffin, Esq.

Secretary of the Florida Department of Business and Professional Regulation

# THE FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS & PROFESSIONAL REGULATION

# UNLICENSED ACTIVITY PROGRAM

DBPR's Unlicensed Activity Program is housed within its Division of Regulation. The Division of Regulation is the enforcement authority for Florida's professional boards and programs across 21 fields of industry. The Division exists to protect the citizens of the State of Florida by empowering them to recognize the danger of unlicensed activity and investigate complaints filed against unlicensed individuals.

## IN THE 2023-2024 FISCAL YEAR ALONE, DBPR'S UNLICENSED ACTIVITY PROGRAM COMPLETED:



519 community outreach events to thousands of Floridians, including seniors, licensees and professionals.

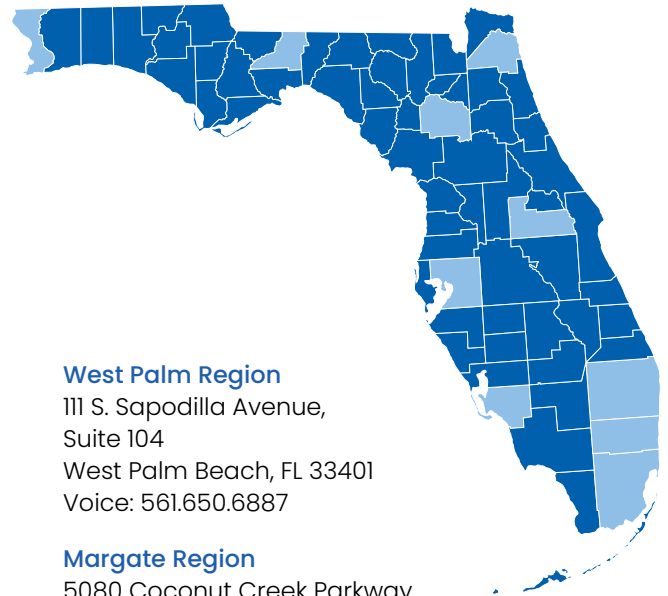


Six proactive enforcement operations in collaboration with local law enforcement.



A series of social media, television and radio campaigns warning Floridians against the dangers of hiring unlicensed contractors and real estate professionals that delivered nearly 3.4 million impressions statewide.

Division of Regulation investigators are located at ten locations across the State of Florida: Pensacola, Tallahassee, Jacksonville, Gainesville, Orlando, Tampa, Ft. Myers, West Palm Beach, Margate, and Miami.



### COMPLAINTS/INVESTIGATIONS HEADQUARTERS

2601 Blair Stone Road  
Tallahassee, FL 32399  
Voice: 850.488.0782

#### Pensacola Region

160 West Government Street  
Suite 501  
Pensacola, Florida 32502  
Voice: 850.595.0143

#### Tallahassee Region

2601 Blair Stone Road  
Tallahassee, FL 32399  
Voice: 850.488.0063

#### Jacksonville Region

4161 Carmichael Avenue, Suite  
254 A  
Jacksonville, FL 32207  
Voice: 904.727-5591

#### Gainesville Region

240 NW 76th Drive, Suite A  
Gainesville, FL 32607  
Voice: 352.313.6623

#### Orlando Region

400 W. Robinson Street  
N802  
Orlando, FL 32801  
Voice: 407.317.7835

#### Tampa Region

1313 North Tampa Street  
Suite 915  
Tampa, FL 33602  
Voice: 813.233.4419

#### Fort Myers Region

2295 Victoria Avenue,  
Suite 271  
Fort Myers, FL 33901  
Voice: 239.338.2376

#### West Palm Region

111 S. Sapodilla Avenue,  
Suite 104  
West Palm Beach, FL 33401  
Voice: 561.650.6887

#### Margate Region

5080 Coconut Creek Parkway,  
Suite A  
Margate, FL 33063  
Voice: 954.956.3629

#### Miami Region

8240 NW 52<sup>nd</sup> Terrace, Suite 304  
Doral, FL 33166  
Voice: 305.513.3437



## TARGET AUDIENCE & MESSAGING

# WHO WE WANT TO REACH

## AUDIENCES

### LICENSED PROFESSIONALS IN FLORIDA'S CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY

Florida's construction industry professionals understand better than anyone the threats that unlicensed activity poses to the public, their industry and their bottom line. Their daily interaction with the public also places them in the perfect position to learn about unlicensed activity taking place in their community. We need their help to report it as well as encourage consumers to do the same.

### THOUGHT LEADERS

Florida's statewide and local construction and trades associations have their finger firmly on the pulse of the construction industry. Led by experienced members and association executives that are well-respected experts in their field, association leadership can lend their credibility to the cause and educate their members on the importance of reporting unlicensed activity.

### CAREER & TECHNICAL EDUCATION PROVIDERS

Career and technical educators play a pivotal role in nurturing the next generation of construction industry professionals. By teaching students about the impact of unlicensed activity and the significance of reporting it, educators can help protect our communities and the future of the industry.

## AUDIENCE VALUES



A business-friendly environment where hard work is rewarded and reputable professionals can thrive.



Fair competition based on skill, experience, and professional integrity, rather than cutting corners or underbidding.



A demonstrated commitment to industry professionals and the public to protect consumers from predatory, unsafe and fraudulent practices and hold bad actors accountable.

# MESSAGING



## PROTECT FLORIDIANS

Unlicensed contractor activities jeopardize public safety by ignoring regulatory standards and potentially exposing individuals to substandard workmanship, hazardous conditions and financial exploitation. Additionally, unlicensed contractors often lack proper insurance coverage, leaving consumers vulnerable to financial risks and without recourse in the event of damages or accidents. We can help protect our neighbors by reporting this unlawful behavior.

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## PROTECT YOUR BOTTOM LINE

Unlicensed construction activities threaten licensed contractors' livelihoods by fostering a "race to the bottom", where licensed professionals are forced to reduce their profit margins to compete with unqualified individuals offering substandard workmanship, improper materials and inadequate safety measures. This creates an imbalanced market, making it difficult for reputable professionals to secure the projects and income they rightfully deserve. You've worked hard for your license, your reputation and to build your business. Protect it by reporting unlicensed activity.

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## PROTECT OUR INDUSTRY

Unlicensed activity in the construction industry compromises fair competition, erodes consumer trust and diminishes the value of licensed professionals. This ultimately threatens the reputation and future of Florida's entire construction industry. We can help protect our industry by reporting these bad actors.

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## HOLD OFFENDERS ACCOUNTABLE

Bad actors who commit unlicensed activities should be held accountable for their disregard of the law. Their actions not only endanger lives and property values, but also erode consumer trust and create an unfair advantage that undermines and undercuts licensed professionals. Reporting unlicensed activity helps to level the playing field and is an essential first step in holding these offenders accountable.

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## REPORTING LICENSED ACTIVITY IS EASY

Reporting unlicensed activity in Florida is simple. You can report suspicious activity via the toll-free Unlicensed Activity Hotline at (866) 532-1440 or submit a complaint through our mobile app or online at [www.MyFloridaLicense.com](http://www.MyFloridaLicense.com).

## SOCIAL MEDIA COPY & IMAGES

# SAMPLE SOCIAL MEDIA

### X [Twitter]:

Protect Florida's construction industry! Report unlicensed activity and help maintain high standards in our communities. Together with @FloridaDBPR, let's build a safer future for all Floridians. #UnlicensedActivity #ConstructionIndustry

### Facebook:

As members of the construction industry, we're proud to help shape Florida's future. Let's work together to combat unlicensed activity by reporting it to the Florida Department of Business and Professional Regulation (DBPR). By protecting our industry, we're ensuring safer, more prosperous communities for everyone. #UnlicensedActivity #ConstructionIndustry #SaferCommunities

### Instagram:

Our construction industry builds dreams for Florida residents. Let's protect those dreams by combatting unlicensed activity with the help of @Florida.DBPR. Report unlicensed activity and ensure safe, quality work that Florida residents deserve. #UnlicensedActivity #ConstructionIndustry #FloridaStrong

### LinkedIn:

Industry professionals, we need your help! Unlicensed activity poses a significant threat to the construction industry and public safety. Join us in supporting the Florida Department of Business and Professional Regulation (DBPR) by reporting unlicensed activity and upholding the high standards that make our industry strong. Together, we can build a brighter future for Florida. #UnlicensedActivity #ConstructionIndustry #ProfessionalStandards



## EMAIL COPY & HEADER IMAGE

# SAMPLE EMAIL

### SAMPLE HEADER IMAGE



### SUBJECT LINES

- Protect Your Neighbors & Your Bottom Line by Reporting Unlicensed Activity
- Help Us Hold Unlicensed Criminals Accountable
- Support Our Industry: Let's Combat Unlicensed Activity Together

### BODY COPY

Dear Members,

You, better than anyone, understand the dedication and hard work it takes to be successful in our industry. Unfortunately, there are bad actors seeking to undermine that. Unlicensed activity in Florida is a threat to the public, our industry and our bottom lines and we need your help in addressing this critical issue.

Unlicensed activity is not a new threat to our industry. Bad actors seeking to prey on our residents and undercut our businesses have been around longer than we have, and it's time we take action to stop them in their tracks. To do this, we've partnered with the Florida Department of Business and Professional Regulation (DBPR) to take significant strides in reducing these crimes. DBPR has streamlined the reporting process, making it easier for professionals like you to report concerns online, by phone or through their mobile app. Under Governor DeSantis' leadership and in partnership with Florida's Attorney General, they are holding offenders accountable by helping to ensure they are prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law.

Now it's time we do our part and help them investigate every bad actor we encounter by reporting their unlicensed activity online at [MyFloridaLicense.com](https://www.myfloridalicense.com) or by calling the Unlicensed Activity Hotline at 866.532.1440. Complaints can be anonymous.

We hope you will join us in this fight. By reporting unlicensed activity, you're not only protecting the public, you are also helping to maintain a fair market for licensed professionals. Thank you for your continued dedication to our industry and your support in safeguarding its future.

Sincerely,  
Name & Title



## NEWSLETTER ARTICLE COPY & IMAGE

# SAMPLE NEWSLETTER ARTICLE

### SAMPLE TITLES

- 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

### BODY COPY

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](https://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.

# SLIDES TO SHARE IN YOUR NEXT MEETING

## CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY PROFESSIONALS SHAPE FLORIDA'S FUTURE.

Join us in combating unlicensed activity by reporting it to the Florida Department of Business and Professional Regulation (DBPR). By protecting our industry, we're ensuring safer, more prosperous communities for everyone.

Report Unlicensed Activity Online at [MyFloridaLicense.com](http://MyFloridaLicense.com) or  
Call the Unlicensed Activity Hotline at 866.532.1440



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## WE NEED YOUR HELP!

### UNLICENSED ACTIVITY POSES A SIGNIFICANT THREAT TO THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY, PUBLIC SAFETY AND YOUR BOTTOM LINE.

If you see unlicensed activity, report it and encourage your colleagues and clients to do the same. Report unlicensed activity online at [MyFloridaLicense.com](http://MyFloridaLicense.com) or call the Unlicensed Activity Hotline at 866.532.1440. Together, we can build a brighter future for Florida.



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# PROTECT THE PUBLIC, OUR PROFESSION & YOUR BOTTOM LINE

## BY REPORTING UNLICENSED ACTIVITY

Unlicensed contractors threaten the safety of our communities, undermine the integrity of our profession and reduce our bottom line.

We've joined forces with the Florida Department of Business and Professional Regulation (DBPR) to combat this issue and we need your help! Report unlicensed activity online at [MyFloridaLicense.com](http://MyFloridaLicense.com) or call the Unlicensed Activity Hotline at 866.532.1440.

**TOGETHER, WE CAN ENSURE A BRIGHTER FUTURE FOR  
OUR INDUSTRY AND THE COMMUNITIES WE SERVE.**



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## THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING OUR EFFORTS TO STOP UNLICENSED ACTIVITY IN THE STATE OF FLORIDA.

Your support not only upholds the high standards of your profession,  
but also and ensures the health, safety and wellbeing of  
our state's residents and visitors.

### Florida Department of Business & Professional Regulation

2601 Blair Stone Road  
Tallahassee, FL 32399

Phone: (850) 487-1395  
TTY: (800) 955-8771  
Email: [ULA@MyFloridaLicense.com](mailto:ULA@MyFloridaLicense.com)

[MyFloridaLicense.com](http://MyFloridaLicense.com)



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