

the

TOOLBOX

January 2018

The year in review

CCB Administrator James Denno

As I write my last article of the year for The Toolbox, I'm reminded that we may not have made headlines but the Board and the staff were busy serving Oregonians and the contracting community throughout 2017. I'd like to share a few highlights.

First, after two years of gathering your input and ideas, discussions by the Board, and outreach and planning, we completed work on new rules for residential contractor continuing education. You can now take the courses you believe to be the most helpful and relevant to your business and the required three hours of CCB courses are now available to you free of charge. CCB staff continues to approve courses and providers, so check out our online course catalog for available courses.

Secondly, over the past four years we have worked hard on becoming an efficient and effective operation. We have held the line on our costs and trimmed unnecessary positions from our organizational chart. Because of these efforts, the ending balance for our 2015-17 budget was sufficient to allow the Board to approve a temporary reduction in the license fee. For the 2017-19 budget period, the license fee has been reduced from \$325 to \$250 for a two-year contractor license.

Finally, our Enforcement Manager, Stan Jessup, has been working hard to improve the effectiveness of our field enforcement as well as the efficiency of our internal processing of enforcement cases. As a result, we are doing roughly twice as much enforcement as we were able to do just a couple of years ago.

And speaking of Stan, he has just been appointed interim administrator for the CCB. I recently accepted a position at another agency and will be leaving the CCB on Jan. 9.

Stan will serve as administrator while recruitment for a permanent replacement takes place. I have to say that the past 3 ½ years at the CCB have been the most rewarding of my career. It has been a privilege to work with the very dedicated Board and staff here, and to meet many of you hard-working contractors along the way. I wish you all a prosperous 2018, and happy trails until we meet again!



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Continuing education update: Residential contractors

Here's a reminder about the requirements for residential contractors since we've had a series of changes. Every license renewal cycle, residential contractors must complete:

- Three hours of CCB laws, regulations and business practices classes plus
- Five or 13 hours of other approved classes. Only contractors licensed less than six years need the 13 hours.

The CCB still must approve all providers and courses but you have more choices than ever.

Check the Course Catalog on the CCB website to see if a course is approved or contact the CCB in advance. Additionally, most courses from accredited education institutions and other government agencies are approved even though they may not appear in the Course Catalog.

“Live” CCB classes

The CCB is developing its 2018 calendar of in-person rules, regulations and business practice courses. These are all three-hour courses, and are free. The CCB will offer the course in more than a dozen locations throughout Oregon.

As the schedule is developed, you can find it here.

The City of Portland Home Energy Score Brings New Opportunities for Contractors

Homeowners who list houses for sale within the City of Portland now must have a Home Energy Report, as required by the City of Portland Home Energy Score program. These reports will be made available to potential buyers who can then factor in energy costs at the time of purchase.

The Home Energy Report takes a similar approach to a miles-per-gallon sticker you would see when buying a car. It provides information in a clear and easy to understand format.

The Home Energy Report contains the Home Energy Score, a number on a scale from 1 to 10 with “10” being the highest and “5” the average. The score

takes into account how the house was built, not the behaviors of its inhabitants. The report also provides recommendations on how to make the home more energy efficient and shows the savings that may be realized.

Key links

Learn more about home energy assessments and the new City of Portland Home Energy Score program at www.pdxhes.com.

Energy assessments are relatively inexpensive and take less than an hour to perform. Homeowners who want to list their property should call an authorized home energy assessor.

Find a list of authorized home energy assessors.

To become a home energy assessor

Becoming an authorized home energy assessor takes between four to six weeks and costs about \$625. This includes the costs of Oregon CCB licensing. Applicants must be licensed with the CCB as a residential contractor or as a restricted Home Energy Performance Score Contractor (for those who just issue energy scores but don't work on homes).

Download this seven-step roadmap to becoming an authorized assessor.

Making homes more efficient

With the new program in Portland, homeowners can use the Home Energy Report to improve homes to be more efficient and comfortable, cost less and become healthier for the families who live in them.

Contractors play a pivotal role in the success of the initiative and have a terrific opportunity to enhance their business and the community!

This article was written by Lise L. Luchsinger, Home Performance Guild of Oregon.



Key contacts

- Licensing questions: 503-378-4621
- Report unlicensed activity: 503-934-2229
- Dispute resolution (mediation) questions: 503-934-2247
- Education questions: 503-934-2227

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Kurt Bolser, Vice Chair, Grants Pass

Dylan Bochsler, Stayton

Andrea Noble, Central Point

Eric Olson, Salem

James Patrick, Newport

Susan Steward, Portland

Lose your RMI? You have 14 days to get a new one

A new law gives contractors an option to appoint a temporary responsible managing individual (RMI) when the current RMI unexpectedly leaves the business and the contractor is unable to immediately appoint a new one. To appoint a temporary RMI, a contractor must:

1. Notify the CCB within three calendar days of appointing a temporary RMI by submitting the Temporary RMI Request form found under forms on the CCB website.
2. Within 14 calendar days of the notification to the board, the contractor must appoint a permanent RMI and notify the board that they have done so by submitting the RMI Change form found under forms on the CCB website.
3. If the contractor does not appoint a permanent RMI within 14 calendar days, the license will be referred to Enforcement for disciplinary action.

The way to avoid problems is to have multiple RMIs! Questions? Contact the Customer Service Unit at 503-378-4621.

Building code updates

Oct.1, 2017 culminated months of code-related work at the Building Codes Division (BCD). Below is a summary of where to find electrical, plumbing and residential code updates.

2017 Electrical Code – effective Oct.1, 2017.

The Oregon amendments to the Oregon Electrical Specialty Code are captured in Table 1-E. The table was finalized by the Electrical and Elevator Board at the March 23, 2017 meeting. Download the latest Table 1-E for your electrical inspector staff here.

The 2017 Oregon Residential Specialty Code – required by Jan. 1, 2018.

The Residential and Manufactured Structures Board selected a code review committee, then reviewed the proposed 2017 ORSC and finalized a recommendation to the division on May 10, 2017. A no-cost, read-only version of the 2017 ORSC is available here.

2017 Oregon Plumbing Specialty Code – Effective Oct 1, 2017.

The State Plumbing Board selected a code review committee that met five times between January and March 2017. The board reviewed the 2017 OPSC and finalized a recommendation to the division on April 20, 2017. A no-cost read-only version of the 2017 OPSC is available here.

Who represents you on the Construction Contractors Board?

The newest member of the agency's nine-member board is Andrea Noble from Central Point. Andrea sits on the Board as a public member, and works at her family's business which sells heavy equipment. These are your board members:

- **Jim Kitchin**, Portland, chair, residential and small commercial contractor.
- **Dylan Bochsler**, Stayton, large commercial contractor.
- **Kurt Bolser**, Grants Pass, large commercial contractor.
- **Eric Olson**, Salem, home inspector and residential contractor.
- **Jim Patrick**, Newport, residential and small commercial contractor.
- **Susan Steward**, Portland, public member and executive director of Building Owners and Managers Association of Oregon.
- **Andrea Noble**, Central Point, public member.



The board currently has two vacancies- one for a residential and small commercial contractor and the other representing public officials. For information on serving, visit the State of Oregon website.

See who was recently fined

See the penalty report on the CBB website here.

Sweeping Oregon for unlicensed contractors

The CCB's 10 field investigators stay busy year-round checking construction and remodel sites at random for contractor licenses. On occasion, investigators join forces and "sweep" a region of the state. During the last sweep in Southern Oregon, investigators visited 192 construction sites over five days and turned up 31 violations. Here's an interview with lead investigator Eric McLaughlin about how the CCB conducts sweeps.

How do you decide where to go?

It's usually based on need and the last time we conducted a sweep in that area...It could be that the number of complaints (about unlicensed contractors) has risen; the number of claims (from homeowners) against contractors has risen. Or, we just feel a stronger presence in the area might be needed.

Set the scene for Day One of the "Sweep"

I usually assign investigators to certain areas of a city or county. They might visit job sites based on complaints, job permits pulled or just by eyeballing the area. We often invite other agencies or, occasionally, local building officials to join us. This last one we did in Medford, we invited the (Oregon) Department of Revenue to come along. We can show up at any time, including weekends. When we arrive at a worksite, we introduce ourselves, determine who is in charge, and ask questions related to what the project is, who is working for whom, and whether subcontractors are present. At the end of the day, we'll get back together, compare notes, and shift our focus as needed.

What's the typical reception?

Most contractors are happy to see us because they realize we're out there for them. And their attitude affects how the investigation goes. If they're friendly and forthcoming right off the bat, the site check might take just a couple of minutes; we like to get in and out. If they're unfriendly and non-responsive, then we have to start digging around because it's obvious something's not right. We are typically a friendly bunch, professional in our demeanor and enjoy meeting our licensed contractors. We will discuss any concerns we see with the contractor so they are not left wondering about the outcome of our visit.

What are you looking for?

We're looking for their CCB number, what business name they operate under and, if they have employees, the names of those employees. If employees are run through a temporary agency or leasing agency, we'll need to know that. We often ask for information about the contract. Is it a verbal or a written contract and for how much. We might ask to see the contract. If it's a plumber or electrician, we'll also ask to see their Building Codes Division license. We don't inspect their work; that's what the building inspectors do. But we might discuss the scope of the project. If the homes are target housing (built before 1978), we'll want to make sure they're following the lead-based paint renovation rules and practices.

What are the biggest problems we find?

The big issue is people working unlicensed and that includes people who have allowed their license to lapse, not just the fresh out-of-the-gate contractor who is unaware of needing a license or those attempting to fly under the radar.

After that, it's employee issues. We want to make sure that the contractor is licensed appropriately and has an active workers' compensation policy covering their employees.

Do the investigators issue "tickets?" on the spot?

We may cite unlicensed contractors on the spot because of the fly-by-night nature of their work. Most often, we will send our information to Salem and let the CCB (compliance officers) decide whether to proceed with a penalty. Contractors should respond as quickly as possible to any notices from the CCB. By the way, we can hold contractors accountable if they owe money to other agencies, say the Revenue Department for not reporting payroll or Bureau of Labor and Industries for not paying employees. The CCB can suspend the contractor's license until they settle the issue with the other agency.

How can contractors help CCB enforcement?

We do our best to make contractors' jobs easier by trying to eliminate the unlicensed competition and we rely on information contractors provide. Report unlicensed activity:

Email: ccbtips@ccb.state.or.us

Phone: 503-934-2229

Complete online form:

www.oregon.gov/CCB/complaints/Pages/file-complaint.aspx

Reporters can remain anonymous. We're only interested in a location, the type of work under way and why the caller thinks we should be looking at it.