



South Carolina Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation



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SC LLR Issues Consumer Alert for Property Repairs After Hurricane Helene

(SC LLR) — Following Hurricane Helene, the South Carolina Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation (SC LLR) is warning consumers to watch out for scams during property repairs.

“We know people want to get repairs done quickly,” said Janet Baumberger, Board Executive of the South Carolina Residential Builders Commission. “However, it’s crucial to take precautions when hiring contractors.”

The Commission highlights two common issues: overpaying in advance and hiring unlicensed contractors. The unlicensed practice of building in South Carolina is a misdemeanor, punishable by jail time or a fine as per S.C. Code Ann. § 40-59-200 and § 40-11-200.

“Legitimate contractors don’t demand large upfront payments,” added Baumberger. “Scammers often take money and disappear without completing the work.”

SC LLR’s Tips for Consumers:

1. **Document Damage:** Take photos before starting repairs.
2. **Check Licenses:** Use LLR’s “Licensee Lookup” at www.llr.sc.gov to verify a contractor’s license.
3. **Ask Questions:** Unsure if a job requires a license? Call 803-896-4696.
4. **Avoid Urgency Traps:** Don’t hire just because someone is immediately available.
5. **Check Permits:** Contact local building departments about necessary permits and inspections.
6. **Get Recommendations:** Ask friends, family, or coworkers for contractor recommendations.
7. **Report Issues:** Report unlicensed contractors to LLR or local authorities.

Before Work Begins:

1. **Hire Licensed and Insured Contractors:** Ensure they’re state-licensed and bonded.
2. **Don’t Pay in Advance:** Wait until the work is complete.

3. **Verify ID and License:** Ask for photo ID and SC license or registration.
4. **Get It in Writing:** Don't rely on verbal agreements. Get multiple estimates in writing.
5. **Beware of Unsolicited Offers:** Be cautious of contractors offering "leftover materials" for a discount.

Contract Requirements:

Before work starts, your contract should include:

1. Contractor's name, address, and SC license number.
2. Start and finish dates.
3. Scope of work and materials to be used.
4. Total cost and payment terms.

During the Project:

1. **Contact Inspectors:** Ensure repairs meet building codes.
2. **Monitor Work:** Don't pay until the work meets contract standards.
3. **Avoid Cash Payments:** Use credit cards or checks written to the company.

Who Should Be Licensed:

The Residential Builders Commission licenses residential builders and specialty contractors (e.g., electricians, roofers). You can verify a contractor's license at www.llr.sc.gov or call the Residential Builders Commission: 803-896-4696 or Contractor's Licensing Board and Building Codes Council: 803-896-4686.

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About SC LLR:

The South Carolina Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation promotes the health, safety, and economic well-being of the public through regulation, licensing, education, and enforcement

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