

## What is residential building contractor (RBC) licensing?

- A building contractor or remodeler license is required for anyone who contracts directly with a homeowner to provide building construction services in more than one skill area.
- The goal of licensing is to ensure a higher level of professionalism and consumer protection.
- Homeowners who do not hire a licensed contractor have no protections.
- State licensing of residential building contractors began in 1992.

### *Who needs an RBC license?*

- Any individual or company that contracts directly with an owner of "residential real estate" to provide work in more than one special skill.
- An owner of residential real estate who builds or improves homes for resale or speculation.

"Residential real estate" means a new or existing building constructed for habitation by one to four families and includes detached garages.

### *What's the difference between a residential building contractor license and a residential remodeler license?*

A residential remodeler can only perform work on existing structures -- they cannot build new homes or detached garages. A residential building contractor can perform all of the work that a residential remodeler can plus they can build new structures.

### *Who does not need an RBC license?*

- Subcontractors who do not contract with the homeowner, yet they must register with DLI through the [Contractor Registration Program](#);
- Commercial contractors, yet they must register with DLI through the [Contractor Registration Program](#);
- Employees of a licensed contractor;
- Contractors who work on residential buildings with more than four units;
- Material suppliers who do not install or attach the items they sell;
- Owners doing work on their own property (unless they are building or improving properties they own for purposes of resale or speculation);
- Architects or engineers doing work within the scope of their practice;
- Residential building contractors whose gross annual receipts\* from their residential activities are less than \$15,000 **and** have a [Certificate of Exemption](#). "Gross annual receipts" are defined as the total amount derived from residential contracting or remodeling activities, regardless of where the activities are performed, and must not be reduced by cost of goods sold, expenses, losses or any other amount.

### *What is a "special skill" area?*

A contractor who provides services in more than one special skill area must be licensed. Specialty contractors who provide only one "special skill" are not required to have a state license (except residential roofers).

See the chart below for details about special skill categories:

## **"Special skill" means one of the following eight categories**

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### **1. Excavation**

- excavation
- trenching
- grading
- site grading

### **2. Masonry/concrete**

- drain systems
- poured walls
- slabs and poured-in-place footings
- masonry walls
- masonry fireplaces
- masonry veneer
- water resistance and waterproofing

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### **3. Carpentry**

- rough carpentry
- finish carpentry
- doors, windows and skylights
- porches and decks (excluding concrete footings)
- wood foundations
- drywall installation (excluding taping and finishing)

### **4. Interior finishing**

- floor covering
- wood floors
- cabinet and countertop installation
- insulation and vapor barriers
- interior or exterior painting
- ceramic, marble and quarry tile
- wallpapering
- ornamental guardrail and installation of prefabricated stairs

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### **5. Exterior finishing**

- siding
- soffit, fascia and trim
- exterior plaster and stucco
- painting
- rain carrying systems, including gutters and down spouts

### **6. Drywall and plaster**

- installation
- taping
- finishing
- interior plaster
- painting
- wallpapering

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### **7. Roofing**

- roof coverings
- roof sheathing
- roof weatherproofing and insulation
- repair of roof support system, but not construction of new roof support system

### **8. General installation specialties**

- garage doors and openers
- pools, spas and hot tubs
- fireplaces and wood stoves
- asphalt paving and seal coating
- exterior plaster and stucco
- ornamental guardrail and prefabricated stairs

**Roofers are required to obtain a license.**

**Contact the Department of Labor and Industry for further information.**

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