

# Unlicensed Contractors Are Risky Business

*Jerry Linder*

Our homes are a substantial investment. Most homeowners go to great lengths before they ever sign on the dotted line. They save money, research comparable prices and floor plans, and identify preferable school and work zones.

If so much prep work is involved in building a new home or purchasing a fixer-upper, why would anyone risk doing business with an unlicensed contractor?

As a licensed contractor myself, I understand the anxiety that can accompany deadlines surrounding construction or remodel projects. However, whatever the scenario, whether it's not knowing where to start or being hurried, hiring an unlicensed contractor may provide a quick fix but will always result in serious and lasting consequences to your wallet and property.

- Just last week, the Tallahassee Democrat reported a man posing as a contractor who scammed \$50,000 for home repairs. He, along with other violators, target uniformed and rushed homeowners.
- Earlier this month, the Sarasota Sheriff's office published a press release stating that seven people were arrested on multiple charges during an investigation to protect citizens from unlicensed contractors.
- Also earlier this month, Local 10 News reported over 12 people were netted in a two-day undercover operation targeting unlicensed contractors who preyed on uniformed and rushed homeowners.
- Just last year over 2,100 legal actions were taken against unlicensed subjects, including contractors, according to the Department of Business and Professional Regulation (DBPR), the agency that licenses and regulates businesses and professionals in the State of Florida.

The Florida Home Builders Association (FHBA) understands how important it is to be a licensed contractor and how large a threat unlicensed activity is among unsuspecting homeowners. Every year the FHBA, representing 7,500 builders and trade partners in Florida, requests the state to fully fund DBPR enforcement actions against unlicensed contractors.

*Jerry Linder is a custom home builder and owner of JL Linder Group in St. Augustine and Vintage Homes in Tallahassee, a Past President of the Northeast Florida Builders Association, and 2015 President of the Florida Home Builders Association.*