

## Licensees must pass criminal check

The Nevada State Contractors Board is first and foremost an advocate for the public. While the licensing and investigative staff works hard to create a helpful and cooperative environment for contractors, their primary objective is to ensure the health, safety and welfare of citizens of Nevada when they are dealing with construction, maintenance or repair situations.

Such a situation arose earlier this year. In May, Board investigators received a complaint against Matthew Schieberl, who was conducting business in the company name, "Mr. and Mrs. Fixall Handyman Service." A quick search of NSCB records unveiled that Schieberl did not possess a valid Nevada contractor's license. The homeowner who complained - a single mother of two children - had hired Schieberl on the referral from a prominent insurance company.

She hired him to repair water damage in her home. Trusting the source and subsequently the contractor, the homeowner provided Schieberl a key to her home.

Once she filed the complaint, Board investigators learned Schieberl was a registered sex offender involving children and/or mentally ill persons and was still on probation. NSCB imme-

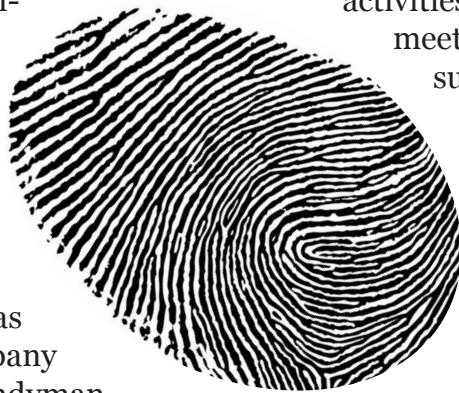
diately placed a call to the homeowner to ensure Schieberl was no longer working in her home and advised her to change the locks on her doors. Investigators then called Nevada's Parole and Probation Division to inform them of Schieberl's activities. After he failed to appear for a meeting at NSCB's office, the case was submitted to the district attorney for prosecution.

On September 23, 2014, Schieberl appeared in Henderson Justice Court for his arraignment and was in custody for violating his probation. He pleaded guilty to contracting without a license, agreed to pay restitution to the homeowner, and is currently awaiting adjudication for his probation violation.

The case underscores one of the many reasons NSCB continually urges homeowners to hire only licensed contractors. All licensees have undergone criminal background checks, along with their trade and law examinations, proof of workers compensation and liability insurance, approved financial statements and relevant experience.

This past quarter was typical. During the reporting period, the Investigations Department closed 105 background checks. Among the activity the investigations uncovered - which the applicants did not disclose, as required - driving under

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# Have a safe and happy Thanksgiving

Thanksgiving can be fun and festive for some and emotionally and physically challenging for others. Since seniors are especially vulnerable to certain holiday-related health pitfalls, SCAN Health Plan offers [these five tips](#) to a healthier Thanksgiving - and holiday - season:

**Don't dine alone.** Many senior centers provide opportunities for people to enjoy a hearty Thanksgiving meal in the company of others. Sharing the holiday with others not only lifts your spirits, but provides a well-balanced healthy meal. If you're able, find out how to volunteer to help prepare and serve this year's Thanksgiving feast.

**Mind your heart.** Calories and fat still count during the holidays. Overeating can lead to everything from heartburn to a heart attack. Limit gravies, butter and other high-fat choices with plenty of vegetables and lean white meat. If you experience chest pain, don't delay seeing a doctor.

**Drink in moderation.** Besides a nasty hangover and obvious safety hazards, over-imbibing can have many negative effects - some social and some physical - including depression, an inflammation of the pancreas, hepatitis and an irregular heartbeat. Limit your intake to no more than one alcoholic drink per day for women and no more than two drinks per day for men. And never drink and drive.

**Plan ahead.** Be sure to have an up-to-date list of medications you are taking. If you do face a health emergency during the holidays, it's important for your doctor to know your current medical conditions and have a list of your medications.

**Keep your health in focus.** If you feel under the weather - physically or mentally - during the holidays, don't wait to visit your doctor. Colds, flu and depression are much more common during this season.

"Thanksgiving can be a joyous start to the holiday season, but it is especially important that seniors take care of themselves during this time," said Tom Lescault, president of SCAN Health Plan Arizona.



Blogger Aisra Shervani offers [tips for seniors](#) who will be travelling during the holidays:

**Plan ahead.** If you are driving, it makes sense to plan your route and the times you will be traveling ahead of time. Pick the most efficient route for you. This does not mean the quickest route. You want to pick the route that will get you to your destination quickly, but safely. Sometimes that means taking the long way around. For instance, when traveling near large cities, you will often have the choice of a route around the city or through it. Unless your destination is inside the city, you may want to go around. Taking the long way around will allow you to avoid unnecessary traffic jams and accidents. Plan your route so that you are traveling through the highest traffic areas in the late morning, afternoon, or late evening to avoid the morning and evening rushes.

Plan ahead when flying to save money. Purchase your tickets ahead of time for lower prices and travel on lighter traveling days. You can sign up for many online services that will let you know ahead of time about travel deals during the holidays. The day before Thanksgiving and the following Sunday are the busiest travel days, so avoid traveling by air on those days. Flying on Black Friday will almost guarantee that you will avoid the crowds because most people will be shopping.

# NSCB earns innovation award

The Nevada State Contractors Board is the proud recipient of the National Association of State Contractors Licensing Agencies' 2014 Innovation in Regulation Award. The award highlights the Board's efforts in 2012 to partner with The Home Depot and local building departments to create and launch PermitsUSA, a kiosk system placed in Home Depot stores allowing contractors and consumers to purchase building permits from multiple jurisdictions at one time. The award also recognizes the Board's development of a mobile application designed to provide the public with immediate and direct access to contractor license information and filing complaints.

"We are honored to receive this award and have our efforts to assist contractors and consumers recognized on a national scale," commented NSCB Executive Officer Margi Grein. "These accomplishments were made possible because of the dedication and collaboration from representatives of The Home Depot, building department staff, and Board staff. We thank you for your time and commitment to enhance services for Nevadans across the state."

PermitsUSA is the product of a unique public-private partnership created to encourage the purchasing of select building permits while enhancing the process and convenience



*NSCB Executive Officer Margi Grein accepts NASCLA's Innovation in Regulation Award at the annual convention in August 2014.*

for users to do so. PermitsUSA links to building jurisdictions' systems, allowing users to interface directly with the various building departments through the in-store kiosk display.

Between September 2012 and June 2013, a total of 644 building permits were pulled using PermitsUSA in Nevada-based Home Depot stores, generating \$42,850 among the four participating jurisdictions. The Home Depot is expanding PermitsUSA to Oregon and Florida this year, and hopes to include options for additional permit purchases, license renewal, a national licensed contractor

database, a national permits database, property data, and improved compliance among its participating jurisdictions.

NSCB's mobile application launched in 2014, making Nevada one of only two states nationally to lead the initiative. Today's consumers and contractors are constantly on the go and in need of a resource that accommodates this mobile lifestyle. NSCB created the free mobile application, which is available for Android and iPhone users, as a solution that offers immediate and direct access to look up a contractor's license and report unlicensed contracting activities. The ability for contractors to submit unlicensed contractor complaints electronically from their phone while out in the field allows NSCB investigators to respond more expeditiously in real time to identify and cite the suspects.

The Innovation in Regulation Award recognizes innovation, creativity, and excellence in regulation of contracting/construction industries, and was presented to the Board at the 52<sup>nd</sup> Annual NASCLA Conference. Executive Officer Grein, who currently serves as Resources Committee Chair and member of the Executive Committee, was elected to Treasurer at the conference. Her two-year term took effect Aug. 28.

## Solar Energy Systems & What to Be Cautious Of

With much focus on renewable “green” energy in recent years, you have likely heard, seen, or been confronted by salespeople interested in selling you the latest system that will reduce your energy and heating bills, saving you tons of money. While many of these businesses are legitimate, the Contractors Board wants to caution homeowners on some of the warning signs of unscrupulous and unlicensed contractors to best ensure your protections are not forfeited by signing a contract that could be considered null and void by law.

- Verify if the business entity(ies) on the contract proposal is a licensed Nevada contractor. If they are, ensure they maintain the appropriate license classification for the work being performed.
- If the contract includes the term “install” or “installation” as part of the delivered services, the entity on the contract MUST be a licensed Nevada contractor. In recent cases, out of state businesses will have the homeowner sign their contract indicating a Nevada licensed contractor will be hired to perform the installation. In this situation, the busi-

ness entity on the contract is acting in the capacity of an unlicensed contractor, making the contract null and void under the law.

- If rebates are part of the sales pitch, make sure you follow up with NV Energy or Southwest Gasto ensure you understand all requirements that must be adhered to, such as permits being pulled, appropriate licensed contractors being used (they often have a list of pre-approved contractors to perform the work), etc.
- Lastly, read the details of your contract very clearly when it comes to financing options. Recent cases unveil a “bait and switch” tactic where the homeowner is told the interest rate will be ‘X’, but it actually ends up being a much higher ‘Y’ when they get their first bill.

As always, please contact the Board with any questions you have PRIOR to signing a contract. Never feel pressured to sign a contract the day you are presented with it. You have a right to take as much time as needed to conduct the necessary research to be able to make an informed decision. A licensed contractor will respect this and afford you the opportunity to do so.

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the influence was the most common, with 10 instances. Other arrests included domestic violence (7); felony narcotics (5); misdemeanor theft (4); misdemeanor battery (4); burglary (4); assault with a deadly weapon (4); assault (2); kidnapping (1); false imprisonment (1); and

robbery (1).

Board investigators routinely access court records, local law enforcement and public data bases to verify issues identified during the background checks.

This quarter, an Investigator identified one applicant with

an outstanding arrest warrant from California for domestic violence.

## Contact NSCB!

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