

CPW DIC website resource:

Verifying licensed contractors and state inspectors

When it comes to construction or inspections, working with verified professionals is key to ensuring safety, compliance, and peace of mind. Whether you are hiring a contractor for your next commercial project or interacting with a state inspector, understanding how to confirm credentials is essential.

This guide will provide actionable tips to help you verify the legitimacy of contractors in Ohio and confidently identify Division of Industrial Compliance (DIC) state inspectors. Use these tools to safeguard your property, resources, and well-being.

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Before hiring a contractor, it's crucial to ensure they are licensed, insured, and reputable. Follow these steps to protect yourself and ensure quality work:

Steps to Verify a Commercial Contractor:

- **Check State Licensing:**

Verify with the Ohio Construction Industry Licensing Board (OCILB) that the contractor is licensed in the state of Ohio.

- **To contact OCILB:**

- <https://elicense4.com.ohio.gov/Lookup/LicenseLookup.aspx>

- This link will allow users to look up a **commercial** contractor with a license. In Ohio, residential contractors are not required to be licensed.

- Ohio regulates the commercial trades of Electrical, HVAC, Plumbing, Hydronics, and Refrigeration.

- Many building departments in Ohio require state licenses for contractors to pull permits for both residential and commercial projects.

- **Verify Qualifications:**

- Ask if the contractor holds a journeyman card or has completed a state-approved apprenticeship program.
 - Request documentation to confirm these qualifications.

- **Connect with Local Building Departments:**

- Contact your county, city, or township building department to verify that the contractor is licensed or registered to work in your area.
- Confirm if permits are required for the specific work being completed. A contractor's refusal to obtain necessary permits could be a red flag.
- **Check Insurance:**
 - Ask for proof of the contractor's insurance.
 - Verify with the insurance company that the policy is active and provides adequate coverage.
- **Request References and Research Work History:**
 - Ask for references from previous clients and verify that the contractor has completed similar projects successfully.
 - Look up online reviews to check their reputation and customer feedback.
- **Understand the Contract:**
 - Thoroughly review any written contract before work begins. Ensure it includes clear details about the project, timeline, and payment terms.
 - Be cautious of vague contracts or contractors pressuring you to sign quickly.
- **Assess Payment Terms:**
 - Be wary of contractors asking for a large down payment or full payment before starting work.
 - Ensure the contract outlines the breakdown of costs for supplies versus labor.
- **Watch for Warning Signs:**
 - Avoid contractors who pressure you into quick decisions.
 - Deals that seem "too good to be true" often are—approach them with caution.

By taking these steps, you can protect yourself from potential scams or substandard work while ensuring your project is completed safely and professionally. Always take your time to verify a contractor's credentials before signing any agreements.

To ensure safety and transparency, it's important to know how to identify legitimate Division of Industrial Compliance (DIC) state inspectors. Use the following tips to verify their identity:

Tips for Verifying DIC State Inspectors:

- **State Fleet Vehicles:**

All DIC inspectors will arrive in an assigned fleet vehicle with official state license plates.

- **Division-Branded Uniforms:**

Inspectors will always wear Division-branded uniform shirts clearly identifying their position.

- **State-Issued Identification Badges:**

Every DIC inspector carries an Ohio Department of Commerce state-issued identification badge.

- **Contact for Verification:**

If you need to confirm an inspector's identity, contact DIC's customer service team at 614-644-2223.

- **Background Checks:**

All DIC inspectors undergo thorough background checks as a condition of their employment.

By keeping these points in mind, you can confidently identify legitimate DIC inspectors and ensure you're working with certified professionals. If at any time you are unsure, don't hesitate to contact the Division for assistance.