



Arizona Registrar of Contractor's Newsletter



Promoting Quality Construction in Arizona for 75 Years

June 2006

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Our web site allows you to check on licensed Contractors providing names, license numbers, complaint history, bonding information, etc. Our toll-free telephone number is 1-888-271-9286.

To view our website go to www.azroc.gov

ROC Locations

Main Office
Phoenix, Arizona

Regional Offices
Glendale
Mesa
Tucson

Local Offices
Flagstaff
Kingman
Lake Havasu
Prescott
Sierra Vista
Show Low
Yuma

A Message from the Director

June has arrived and it is hard to believe that half of 2006 is now history. For those of us in the construction industry, this is an exciting time as unprecedented growth continues to define our communities and our state. Arizona's construction industry often lives in times of "feast or famine," and is currently enjoying all aspects of its feast.

As the agency which regulates licensed contractors, the ROC is also experiencing an increased demand for its services. Currently, the ROC has issued more than 54,000 licenses to contractors doing work in Arizona and receives over 650 new applications every month. To accommodate this growing need, the ROC recently expanded its Small Business Advocate (SBA) program to Tucson and now offers free information sessions for persons interested in becoming a contractor in Southern Arizona.

Since January, our outreach programs have contacted over 23,000 Arizonans in hopes of educating them on the benefits of using licensed contractors while providing our citizens with the tools to identify "unlicensed contractors and scam artists."

Our investigations division continues to conduct sweeps throughout the state to ensure that jobsites are using licensed contractors and obeying Arizona's laws. Since January, this unit stopped almost half a million dollars worth of unlicensed contracting activity in this state utilizing sting operations.

Internally, the ROC has been working to streamline its processes in all departments, especially its technology. The ROC and the state's Government Information Technology Agency (GITA) have been working closely together to develop new strategies to improve services to our customers.

This month, the ROC welcomed Gene Martel and Bob Mechsner to its management team. Gene comes to the ROC from GITA and is our new Assistant Director of Technology. Gene brings over 26 years of experience to the position and a new voice to the executive management team. The ROC also welcomed Bob Mecshner as our new Chief of Inspections upon the retirement of Phil Petrice. Bob has been with the agency for over ten years and brings a wealth of knowledge and skill to this position.

In the Legal Department to keep up with the increased workload, we've made a few personnel, process and physical configuration changes. In terms of process, we have changed our workflow to create two teams for the processing of complaints. These teams will take all cases sent to the Legal Department from citation to hearing from cradle to grave.

I hope you enjoy June's newsletter and I wish you a safe and happy summer.

Fidelis V. Garcia, Acting Director

Expansive Soils

Arizona has experienced the largest building boom in its history. With this increase in building activity many developers are electing to construct homes in areas containing “Expansive Soils”. But what are “Expansive Soils”?

Simply put, the term “Expansive soils” generally means soils that expand when wet and may contract when drying. Building on these soils is challenging for contractors and requires specific construction measures to insure the consumer gets a quality constructed building.

The ROC recommends, before consumers build on any piece of land, that consumers check with their building contractor to determine whether expansive soil is present. Developers normally do this by core sampling (taking a sample of the land earmarked for construction to determine soil content or makeup). Knowing the results of these samplings should be a prerequisite before you build or buy a new home. If the results of the core sample shows the presence of expansive soils, the home purchaser needs to insure that the builders have taken reasonable measures to insure the integrity of the foundation. If the home is already built, the homeowner should require documentation that illustrates the actions taken by the developer to address the expansive soil issue. A simple rule of thumb for the consumer on this issue is “no documentation, no purchase” when a home is built on expansive soils.

So what can consumers do to protect themselves from the problems associated with Expansive Soils?

First, know where the water will be coming from. A consumer

should be told where they can expect water to enter the property in the event of heavy rains or flooding. Knowing where the water is, in what direction the water will flow, and the expected intensity of the water flow will tell the consumer if there may be a continuous problem with their residence’s foundation.

Second, ask if the soil underneath your home was compacted and how it was compacted. Contractors have various means to ensure a homes stability. One of these means requires the builder to introduce non-expansive soil to the building site. Should a builder decide to utilize this method, the type of soil introduced into the development should be readily available to the consumer. Understanding what lies beneath your home will give you good information on the stability of your foundation.

Third, as stated in the ROC’s “Workmanship Standards for Licensed Contractors” handbook, is to insure that the lands grading is such to insure proper drainage away from any structure. This is a particularly acute issue when a home owner considers major landscaping at their residence. Poorly designed landscaping can allow water to seep underneath a residential slab causing it to become unstable. A licensed landscape contractor is generally responsible for correcting workmanship problem whether structural or cosmetic, that occur as a direct result of improper land grading. Homeowners, on the other hand, may have little recourse if they performed the major landscaping activities at their residences.

What other means are being used by licensed developers/

contractors to combat this problem?

Besides soil compaction, many valley contractors install a post-tensioned slab at the beginning of the project. A post tension slab is a concrete slab inlaid with cables that allows a structure to “float on the soil” rather than being locked in place as are convention concrete slabs. These slabs are designed not to break apart during times of ground movement. To meet the ROC workmanship guidelines, these slabs and their footers must be engineered and installed per the engineered plan of the residence. In addition most of these slabs should also be approved by the local building department .

If I want to file a complaint regarding Expansive Soils, can I file with the Registrar’s Office?

The Registrar of Contractor’s office does handle workmanship complaints involving expansive soil. As with all workmanship complaints, the ROC has jurisdiction for two years from the date of occupancy. Complaint forms are available on-line at the ROC website, can be sent directly to you or can be picked up at any ROC office. Call 602-542-1525 or 888-271-9286 for more information.



Legislative Update

Handyman Exemption has been changed!

Formula Change

Old: Item + labor + all other items = \$750

New: Item + labor + all other items = \$1000

New addition to statute:

An appliance and fixture exemption has been added to the handyman statute. In order for the provision to be in effect the following must occur:

Provision applies only to **Electrical** appliances and fixtures.

Electrical appliance and fixtures must remain as originally designed by the manufacturer.

Electrical appliances and fixtures must remain:

Unaltered by any person

Unchanged by any person

Unmodified by any person

Must use a two or three pronged plug and plug into a common electrical outlet

Must not use any other form of energy such as natural gas, propane or other petroleum or gaseous fuel
Must not be attached by a nail, screw or other fastening device (such as silicone) to the *frame or foundation* of any residential structure

If any electrical appliance or fixture is altered, modified or changed the “handyman” \$1000 formula becomes applicable, which means that the appliance, labor and all other materials must not exceed \$1000.

No changes were made to any other provisions in the Handyman Statute.

Effective Date: 90 days following the close of this legislative session

The ROC Reaches Out

The Arizona Registrar of Contractors continues to reach out to the community, labor, civic groups, homeowner, developers and contractors to explain the various functions of the ROC.

During the months of February through May 2006, the ROC has met with 35 different organizations and groups across the state of Arizona. Not limiting our Reach Out initiatives, the ROC has traveled from Tucson to Kingman, to Show Low to Yuma in an effort to educate all of our stakeholders on the what is available through the ROC.

The ROC maintains several different programs for educating our stakeholders and does customize these programs to fit the needs of each individual audience. If your group, association or organization would like to have an ROC presentation, please contact Robert Chavez, the ROC’s Outreach Coordinator, by phone at 602-542-1525 ext. 7555 or by email at robert.chavez@azroc.gov.



The ROC is
HIRING

Inspectors and Investigators

Excellent Benefits: Retirement, Sick and Vacation pay, 10 Paid Holidays, Dental, Standard and Dependant Life Insurance, Short and Long Term Disability, Flexible Spending Accounts, Deferred Compensation, tuition reimbursement and Wellness Programs available.

Please visit our website at
www.azroc.gov



Small Business Advocate Program

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The Registrar of Contractors provides instructional classes to assist the small businessperson fill out the license application. We will show you what information is required, what documentation must be obtained from other sources and where and how to contact those sources. Lastly, we will show you how to put all this information together in your application package. Classes are generally held once a week in the Phoenix office on Thursdays from 9:00 am until noon. We must receive your request to attend at least one week in advance. Class sizes are limited and attendees must register in advance. To register, contact:

Arizona Registrar of Contractors, Phoenix Office
Attention: Sherry Meeder; Small Business Advocate
800 W. Washington
Phoenix, AZ 85007
602-542-1525 ext. 7655
Or by e-mail:
rocsba@azroc.gov

The Small Business Advocate program started in Phoenix December 5, 2003, as of today the program has helped over 1,300 small business owners understand licensing requirements. The Small Business Advocate program expanded to our Southern Regional office in (Tucson) in September, 2004. As of today the Tucson program has helped more than 240 small business owners. Classes are generally held every other week, please contact the Tucson office for the date and time. Class sizes are limited in number and attendees must register in advance. To register, contact:

Arizona Registrar of Contractors
Tucson Regional Office
Attention: Judy Logan; Small Business Advocate
400 W. Congress, Suite 212
Tucson, AZ 85701
520-628-6897
Or by e-mail:
tucsonsba@azroc.gov

Thomson Prometric Proud to Be Working With ROC

Everyone seeking a contractor's license in Arizona will eventually come into contact with Thomson Prometric, the ROC's testing provider. Based in Baltimore, MD, Thomson Prometric has been providing testing services for the ROC for more than a decade, and provides construction testing services in many other states.

In Arizona, tests may be taken at any of the eight Thomson Prometric testing sites around the state. Evening and weekend testing hours are available and candidates can schedule their tests either by phone or online. The 51 exams, delivered in a computer-based format, range from two to four hours in length and consist of multiple-choice questions. A score of 70% or higher is required to pass, and candidates will receive their score reports at the testing site at the conclusion of their exam.

Thomson Prometric prides itself on creating exams that are valid, reliable and legally defensible. Security is also a source of pride. All testing centers adhere to the highest standards of security, with candidate ID verification and video monitoring of testing areas. Each year, Thomson Prometric works with the ROC to evaluate each exam and develop new questions to replenish each test's item bank to prevent item overexposure. This year, Thomson Prometric will be updating a majority of ROC exams to ensure they reflect Arizona's new construction codes. The ROC will be very active in the updating process and will review and approve each new test item.

Between 10,000 and 12,000 ROC exams are administered annually and Thomson Prometric is proud to be the ROC's testing partner. We look forward to many more years of successful collaboration. To schedule an exam, call 1-866-PROMETRIC or visit www.prometric.com.