

NEWS RELEASE

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STENEHJEM URGES CONSUMERS TO MAKE SURE CONTRACTOR IS FULLY LICENSED BEFORE PUTTING MONEY DOWN

Cease & Desist Orders issued against Amador Construction and OakHill Construction.

BISMARCK, ND – Two more unlicensed contractors have been banned from doing business in North Dakota, for a total of fourteen unlicensed contractors banned since January last year, announced Attorney General Wayne Stenehjem.

Edgar Rodriguez, d/b/a **Amador Construction** in Minot, and **Monte Ekern** of South Dakota, d/b/a **OakHill Construction**, were banned after the Consumer Protection division of the Attorney General's office determined that the contractors were not licensed. The division investigated after receiving reports from consumers who had paid advance money to the contractors but the work was never completed. Neither contractor cooperated with investigators. Rodriguez appears to have fled to Colorado.

"These fourteen unlicensed contractors were paid thousands, even tens of thousands of dollars, in advance payments by hardworking North Dakota consumers. Unfortunately, when these disreputable unlicensed contractors disappeared without doing the work they had been paid for, the consumers lost their money," said Stenehjem.

By law, contractors must be licensed with the Secretary of State if they do work valued at \$2,000 or more. The Secretary of State's office maintains an up to date list of licensed contractors on its website at <https://apps.nd.gov/sc/busnsrch/busnSearch.htm>.

Stenehjem urged residents to check the online list before putting down any money. "It is so easy to check for the contractor's license, you can do it with your smart phone while the contractor is right in front of you. If the contractor is not licensed, take it as a warning that you should not proceed. Instead, find a licensed contractor," he said.

Parrell Grossman, director of the consumer protection division, said the contractor licensing requirements protect consumers. "There little hope of recovering money from an unlicensed contractor, especially after he has fled the area," said Grossman.

Stenehjem said requiring an advance non-refundable payment or payment in full before the work is completed may be a sign of a swindle. "Once you have paid the contractor it might be very difficult to get your work completed, or satisfactorily completed," said Stenehjem. Another favorite trick of fly-by-night operators is to set up a North Dakota mail box address so that the business can claim to be a ND business. "Do a little homework before you hire a contractor. Get written estimates, check the contractor's references, and make sure the business is licensed," Stenehjem continued.

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[Amador Construction Cease & Desist](#)
[OakHill Construction Cease & Desist](#)