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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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TDLR joins other states in coordinated enforcement effort against unlicensed contractors

AUSTIN – The Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation (TDLR) will file at least 49 enforcement cases against unlicensed electricians and air conditioning contractors as a result of the agency’s participation in a national operation aimed at deterring illegal, unlicensed activity.

“If you hire an unlicensed contractor, you’re putting your family’s safety at risk. Licensed electricians and air conditioning contractors have completed training and passed examinations that cover regulations and building codes designed to protect health and safety,” said Brian E. Francis, TDLR executive director. “They’ve also had criminal background checks and have liability insurance to cover damage or injuries. Always check the [TDLR website](#) to make sure that your electrician or air conditioning contractor is licensed.”

TDLR enforcement investigators ran a one-week undercover sting in the Houston area. During the sting, TDLR investigators contacted people who advertised electrical and air conditioning services in local newspapers or on social media and did not include license information in the ads as they’re required to do by state law. Investigators filed 49 enforcement cases against unlicensed electricians and air conditioning contractors who offered to perform unlicensed work during the sting.

In addition, TDLR Regulatory Program Management (RPM) electrician program staff and members of the TDLR Anti-Trafficking Unit (ATU) visited 45 construction sites in the Central Texas area where electrical work was being performed, checking 621 people who were working as electricians. The vast majority of those working as electricians were licensed.

Thirty-three people had expired electrician’s licenses and have taken the necessary steps to renew their licenses. Nine people were not licensed to perform any type of electrical work and have been given a chance to apply for the appropriate license. If they have not completed that process by the end of this week, an enforcement case may be opened against them. TDLR RPM electrical program staff may also choose to file enforcement cases against the persons responsible for supervising the performance of unlicensed electrical work.

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The ATU staff were looking for signs of labor trafficking, which often occurs on construction sites, where employers take advantage of workers whose immigration status may be in question, or who may have other issues that make them vulnerable to exploitation.

The national enforcement effort coordinated by the National Association of State Contractors Licensing Agencies (NASCLA) included eight states: Arizona, California, Florida, Minnesota, Mississippi, Nevada, North Carolina and Texas. The operation ran nationally from June 7 to June 25.

When hiring a construction contractor, NASCLA recommends that consumers:

- Verify the contractor is actively licensed; always hire a licensed contractor
- Get 2-3 estimates – don't automatically accept the lowest bid
- Check at least 3 references
- Require a written contract
- Don't make a large down payment; make payments as work is completed
- Monitor the job in progress
- Don't make the final payment until the job is complete
- Keep all paperwork related to your job

See the NASCLA website for [more consumer awareness tips](#).

NASCLA News Release: www.nascla.org/blogpost/1535522/Press-Releases

About TDLR

TDLR provides regulatory oversight for a broad range of occupations, businesses, facilities, and equipment in Texas. The agency protects the health and safety of Texans by ensuring they are served by qualified, licensed professionals. Inspections of individuals, businesses, and equipment are done on a regular basis to safeguard the public. Currently, the agency regulates 40 business and occupational licensing programs with more than 1,000,000 licensees across the state.

Visit TDLR's [website](#) for more information and resources. You can search the [TDLR licensee database](#), and also find [past violations](#) in which a final order was issued against companies or individuals. TDLR's Customer Service line is available anytime between 7 a.m. until 6 p.m., Monday through Friday, at 1-800-803-9202. TDLR representatives are fluent in English, Spanish and Vietnamese.

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