



NEWS **RELEASE**

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PERMITS PROTECT OREGON HOMES, HOMEOWNERS, AND BUSINESSES

Government and building industry join to promote awareness

(Portland) Time to remodel the kitchen? Or maybe you're ready to build your dream home. Whether you're a skillful do-it-yourselfer, or you wouldn't know a two-by-four from a railway tie and need a good contractor, the experts want you to pay attention to a public awareness campaign to be unveiled this week.

State and local building departments and the Construction Contractors Board have joined with the National Electrical Contractors Association (NECA), International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) Local 48 and the Plumbing and Mechanical Contractors Association (PMCA) to launch a public service campaign. Their goal is to remind people that it's in their own best interest to get permits for home construction or remodeling jobs and to use licensed contractors and trades people.

"For most people, their home is their most important investment. We see too many cases where Oregonians have jeopardized the safety and value of their homes by neglecting to get proper building permits or by using unlicensed contractors for remodeling projects," said Linda Riddell, acting administrator of the Oregon Building Codes Division.

The public service campaign is called "Permits Protect." It includes a 30-second television message which launched June 17, 2002 and a Web site with information for consumers, www.permitsprotect.info.

The public service announcements were produced in Portland with help from KGW Northwest NewsChannel 8 television and feature local firefighter Earl Diment. They highlight the importance of obtaining proper building permits and hiring licensed contractors and trades people.

The Web site, www.permitsprotect.info, provides more information on when a permit is needed, how to obtain one, and how to find a licensed contractor, plumber, or electrician. The site also provides links to other helpful Web sites.

The Permits Protect campaign partners developed the program in response to the many cases of unlicensed and non-permitted construction work that building inspectors, builders, and trades people see throughout the state.

According to Bill Sikora, executive director of PMCA, it's a matter of safety and responsibility. "It's important for homeowners to know that doing plumbing or electrical work on your home without permits and licensed craftsman can be extremely dangerous, and costly. A licensed contractor will obtain the proper permits so you'll know the changes you've made are safe and legal."

Use of permits allows local or state building inspectors to review permitted construction work and installations – whether the work was done by a homeowner or by a contractor – to ensure that they are done safely and in accordance with current codes and building standards.

Licensed contractors and trades people know when permits are needed, meet state requirements for training and continuing education, and carry required insurance.

If done incorrectly, even basic construction work or plumbing and electrical installations can become unsafe for homeowners and their families. They can also devalue or even cause damage to homes. Realtors and lenders are aware that the law requires homeowners to have the proper permits when doing construction work on homes to ensure that they are safe and livable for the next owner or tenant.

“In many circumstances, we have homeowners calling needing corrections done at the last minute to allow for closure of the sale of their home,” says Tim Gauthier, the chapter manager of NECA. “Home inspectors often find problems due to improper wiring, which could affect the success of the sale.”

NECA/IBEW Local 48 and PMCA joined this coalition because they are very concerned about safety for homeowners and their families and also for their members, according to Gauthier. Local electricians have repeatedly run into illegal and unsafe electrical work in area homes.

In addition to the state Building Codes Division and the Construction Contractors Board, local building agencies in Multnomah, Clackamas and Washington counties and the United Association of Plumbers and Steamfitters Local 290 are part of the Permits Protect campaign and plan to help distribute related brochures and information using the Permits Protect logo.

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