

Understanding the Difference Between a Licensed Contractor and a Handyman in Residential Construction

SLIDELL, LA, UNITED STATES, July 23, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- When it comes to home repairs, remodeling, or new construction, the choice between hiring a licensed contractor or a handyman can carry legal, financial, and safety implications. Understanding the distinctions between the two roles is essential for homeowners and property managers seeking long-term value and compliance with building codes.



In Louisiana, a licensed contractor is an individual or business authorized by the Louisiana State Licensing Board for Contractors (LSLBC) to perform construction services above certain monetary thresholds. These professionals are required to pass exams, carry liability insurance, and adhere to state regulations. Their licenses cover specific classifications, such as residential, commercial, or mold remediation, ensuring that the scope of work falls within regulated parameters.

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A handyman, on the other hand, typically operates without a formal license when performing minor repair work or small-scale tasks. These can include painting, basic carpentry, door replacements, or fixing drywall—so long as the total project cost does not exceed a legally defined threshold. In Louisiana, any project over \$7,500 (including

labor and materials) requires a licensed contractor. Jobs exceeding this amount without a license are not only illegal but could void homeowners' insurance coverage if damage occurs.

[Elwin Ordoyne](#), Vice President of [E.C.O. Builders Inc.](#) in Slidell, Louisiana, explains that while many

handymen provide valuable services for light maintenance work, larger projects require oversight and credentials to ensure compliance with codes and proper permitting. “It’s not just about the work being done,” Ordoyne says. “It’s about whether the work can be verified, inspected, and guaranteed to meet current building standards.”



Licensed contractors are held accountable to state boards and must follow established construction best practices. They also carry insurance that can protect property owners in the event of injury, damage, or unfinished work. This is especially critical in larger residential renovations such as additions, structural modifications, roofing, and electrical or plumbing systems—areas where building codes are strictly enforced.

Another key distinction lies in permitting. Permits are often required for structural changes, HVAC replacements, and plumbing or electrical work. A licensed contractor is authorized to apply for and oversee these permits, ensuring inspections occur at various stages of the job. A handyman is generally not permitted to pull such permits, which can result in code violations, fines, or delayed resale of the property.

In some cases, unpermitted or poorly executed work can lead to significant consequences. Properties placed on the market with undisclosed, uninspected alterations may be subject to legal action. Mortgage lenders and home inspectors will flag unpermitted work, complicating transactions. Proper documentation from licensed professionals can prevent these issues altogether.

From a financial standpoint, the initial cost of hiring a licensed contractor may be higher, but the long-term value is often more secure. Licensed contractors provide written estimates, formal contracts, and warranties that outline the scope, duration, and expectations for a job. These agreements reduce the likelihood of disputes and increase the chance of a satisfactory outcome.

There is also a reputational component. Licensed contractors must maintain their status through continuing education and ethical business practices. Consumers can verify a contractor’s license status through the Louisiana State Licensing Board’s online portal, which includes complaint histories and classification details. This level of transparency offers added peace of mind for property owners.

Handymen often rely on word-of-mouth recommendations or online reviews, which, while useful, lack the regulatory backing that licensed contractors are required to uphold. This doesn’t mean all handymen are unqualified or unreliable—but their range of work is legally and practically limited.

Elwin Ordoyne reiterates that the right choice comes down to the scope and complexity of the project. "If a job requires engineering, structural changes, or anything that impacts safety, it's time to talk to a licensed contractor."

E.C.O. Builders Inc., based in Slidell, has decades of experience in residential construction throughout Louisiana. The company's commitment to compliance, quality workmanship, and clear communication has guided homeowners through everything from initial foundation planning to final inspection.

For Louisiana property owners, the safest route forward is to first determine the size and nature of the job, check the state's licensing requirements, and confirm whether permits are needed. Licensed contractors not only provide technical proficiency but also legal protection and accountability—elements that are essential in any project meant to stand the test of time.

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