



LANDSCAPER LICENSING IN OTHER STATES

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QUESTIONS

Does Connecticut require landscapers to be licensed? Which states require landscape contractors to be licensed?

SUMMARY

Connecticut does not require landscapers to be licensed. But “landscaping” falls within the definition of “home improvement” and home improvement contractors doing work above certain monetary thresholds must register with the Department of Consumer Protection (DCP) ([CGS § 20-419](#)). A contractor does not have to register if the total price for an improvement is less than \$200 and less than \$1,000 for all of his or her contracts in a 12-month period.

We identified five states that require landscape contractors to be licensed. These are California, Hawaii, Mississippi, Nevada, and Utah. All of these states define landscaping differently. Thus, the purpose for which a license is required varies from state-to-state, as do the license fees and penalties for violations. All five states have minimum experience and examination requirements for licensure.

CONNECTICUT

Connecticut only requires home improvement contractors to register with DCP and annually pay (1) a \$120 registration fee ([CGS § 20-421](#)) and (2) \$100 to the Home Improvement Guarantee Fund, which was established to reimburse people unable to recover losses suffered because a registered contractor failed to fulfill a contract ([CGS § 20-432](#)).

CALIFORNIA

California defines a “landscape contractor” as someone who constructs, maintains, repairs, installs, or subcontracts the development of landscape systems and facilities for public and private gardens and other areas designed to aesthetically,

architecturally, horticulturally, or functionally improve the grounds within or surrounding a structure or a tract or plot of land. A landscape contractor also prepares and grades plots and areas of land for the installation of any architectural, horticultural, and decorative treatment or arrangement (Cal. Code Regs. tit. 16 § 832.27).

Anyone seeking to be licensed as a landscape contractor must submit an application to the California Department of Consumer Affairs along with a \$300 fee (Cal. Code Regs. tit. 16 § 811). He or she must also have four years' experience, within the last 10 years immediately before the application, at a journey level or as a foreman, supervising employee, contractor, or owner-builder. The experience must be verified by a qualified and responsible person, such as a homeowner, employer, fellow employee, journeyman, contractor, union representative, building inspector, architect, or engineer (Cal. Code Regs. tit. 16 § 825). Comparable knowledge or training may be substituted for experience (Cal. Code Regs. tit. 16 § 826).

California also requires landscape contractors to pass a landscaping-specific exam (Cal. Code Regs. tit. 16 § 840). (For California's landscaping contractor examination study guide, see <http://www.cslb.ca.gov/Resources/StudyGuides/C27StudyGuide.pdf>.)

Penalties for violations of pertinent laws vary depending on severity and other factors, but can range from a civil fine of \$100 to \$5,000 (Cal. Code Regs. tit. 16 § 884).

HAWAII

Hawaii defines a "landscaping contractor" as someone who:

1. prepares plots of land for architectural horticulture;
2. provides decorative treatment and arrangement of gardens, lawns, and other vegetation;
3. constructs conservatories, hot and greenhouses, drainage and sprinkler systems, among other things; and
4. places hydro-mulching for ground cover and for soil containment, which includes installing certain irrigation control wiring (Haw. Code R. Chapter 77, Exhibit A, Specialty Contractor Classifications).

Anyone seeking to be licensed as a landscape contractor must submit an application to the Hawaii Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs with a \$50 application fee, \$75 examination fee, and a \$415 or \$545 license fee depending on the application date (http://hawaii.gov/dcca/pvl/faqs/contractor_faq.pdf).

An applicant must have, within the 10 years immediately before the application, at least four years of experience in the particular classification he or she intends to work (Haw. Code R. § 16-77-18). The contracting board may accept training or other equivalent knowledge or experience to satisfy the experience requirement (Haw. Code R. § 16-77-20). An applicant is also generally required to take and pass a written examination testing his or her knowledge in landscaping (Haw. Code R. § 16-77-40).

The contracting board may suspend, revoke, or refuse to renew a license for any violation of the contracting provisions. It may also impose a bond, fine, or other condition that is acceptable to all interested parties (Haw. Code R. § 16-77-63).

MISSISSIPPI

Mississippi defines "landscape gardening" as horticultural and floricultural work, which is receiving fees for landscaping and setting of plants or selling any plants for which there is a contract for future services (Miss. Code Ann. § 69-19-5).

An applicant for a license must have:

1. graduated from an accredited college or university with at least 15 semester hours in landscaping or its equivalency,
2. obtained at least two years of college or university training with special training in landscaping,
3. graduated from high school and have one year's experience with a licensed landscaper within the past two years, or
4. proof that he or she has at least two years' experience with a licensed landscaper within the past three years (2-1-3 Miss. Code R. § 11.04).

Anyone seeking a landscape horticulturist license must submit an application to the Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce. There is no fee for taking the examination or for the license.

Applicants must take a written examination that covers the professional services provided as a landscape contractor. The examination may be waived if the applicant is (1) licensed by a state with similar standards or (2) a licensed landscape architect (2-1-3 Miss. Code R. § 11.04).

Penalties for violations vary depending on severity and other factors, but can be up to a civil fine of \$5,000 (2-1-3 Miss. Code R. § 07).

NEVADA

Nevada defines a "landscape contractor" as anyone who:

1. grades and prepares land for architectural horticulture;
2. decoratively treats, arranges, plants, and maintains gardens, lawns, shrubs, and other vegetation;
3. constructs drainage and landscape irrigation systems;
4. installs rocks, sand, and other landscape material;
5. controls soil erosion;
6. installs non-engineered landscape ponds or other objects; and
7. installs certain walkways and patio areas (Nev. Admin. Code § 624.280).

Anyone seeking a license as a landscape contractor must submit an application to the Nevada State Contractors' Board along with a \$300 application fee and a \$600 license issuance fee (Nev. Admin. Code § 624.130).

An applicant must submit, among other things, four notarized certificates supporting his or her landscaping experience (Nev. Admin. Code § 624.590). He or she must also take an examination administered by an independent testing service. The landscape contracting board may waive the test if it determines the applicant has enough experience or qualifications to justify granting the license without examination (Nev. Admin. Code § 624.600).

Penalties for violations vary depending on severity and other factors, but can be up to a civil fine of \$50,000 (Nev. Admin Code § 624.7251).

UTAH

Utah defines a "landscaping contractor" as someone who:

1. grades and prepares land for architectural, horticultural, or decorative treatment;
2. arranges and plants gardens, lawns, shrubs, and other vegetation;
3. constructs small decorative pools, tanks, fountains, and other structures;
4. constructs certain retaining walls, except those intended to hold structures or other equipment; and
5. constructs certain patio areas (Utah Admin. Code R156-55a).

Anyone seeking a license as a landscape contractor must submit an application to the Utah Division of Occupational and Professional Licensing along with a \$210 licensing fee (http://dopl.utah.gov/apps/contractor_2014-02-10.pdf).

Utah generally requires an applicant for licensure to have a minimum of two years' experience within the last 10 years under the general supervision of a licensed contractor. This experience must be directly related to landscaping, but the Division of Occupational & Professional Licensing may substitute a passing

examination score for outdated experience (Utah Admin. Code R156-55a-302b(1)(f)). An applicant must sign an affidavit verifying his or her experience before sitting for any examination (Utah Admin Code R156-55a-302a(4)(a)).

An applicant must pass two examinations, including a general Utah Contractor Business Law examination and a landscaping contractor specific examination (Utah Admin. Code R156-55a-302a).

Penalties for violations vary depending on severity and other factors, but can be up to a civil fine of \$4,000 (Utah Admin. Code R156-55a-503).

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