



September 2015



## L&I joins national sting to stop illegal construction

Washington was among nine states participating in a 12-day sting in June to deter illegal construction activity.

Each state decided how it would root out illegitimate contractors during the sting, in coordination with the National Association of State Contractors Licensing Agencies.

L&I conducted four *surprise sweeps* at construction sites around the state and reviewed dozens of online ads for construction services. The emphasis found more than 40 cases of illegal construction activity or advertising, leading to 41 infractions and numerous referrals for possible workers' compensation violations and outstanding debt to L&I.

See details in L&I's news release at [www.Lni.wa.gov/StingRelease](http://www.Lni.wa.gov/StingRelease) and the national news release at [www.nascla.org](http://www.nascla.org).



## Sweeping up unregistered contractors

L&I's fourth year of surprise sweeps has resulted in nearly 60 infractions for unregistered contracting and other construction-related violations.

During sweeps, construction compliance inspectors from a region converge in select communities to visit as many construction sites as they can, checking whether contractors are registered. Surprise sweeps can happen at any time, any day of the week, be it 7 p.m. Thursday or 7 a.m. Sunday. Sweeps will continue through the year, in addition to L&I's unannounced inspections during traditional work hours.

### Surprise sweeps and number of job sites visited (in parentheses) April through August:

**Bellevue/Kirkland** (12): 42 contractors checked; no infractions. Referrals to other L&I programs – 1 audit, 2 collections.

**(South) Bellevue** (11): 17 contractors checked; 4 infractions. Referrals – 4 audit.

**Bellevue/Kirkland/East Side** (45): 114 contractors checked; 8 infractions. Referrals – 4 audit, 6 collections.

**Clark County (Camas, Washougal, Battle Ground, Ridgefield, Vancouver)** (102): 208 contractors, 14 electricians, 14 plumbers checked; 2 infractions. Referrals – 8 audit, 17 collections, 2 electrical.

**Kennewick** (71): 111 contractors checked; 12 infractions. Referrals – 7 audit, 15 collections, 1 safety.

**Kitsap County** (30): 37 contractors, 3 electricians, 2 plumbers checked; 1 infraction. Referrals – 3 audit, 1 collections.

**Thurston County (Lacey, Olympia, Tumwater)** (72): 138 contractors, 14 electricians, 6 plumbers checked; 4 infractions. Referrals – 7 audit, 10 collections.

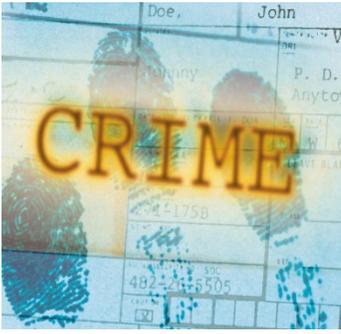
**Seattle** (16): 22 contractors checked; 1 infraction. Referrals – 1 audit, 1 collections.

**Snohomish County** (23): 60 contractors checked; 7 infractions. Referrals – 6 audit, 1 collections.

**Spokane** (50): 82 contractors, 3 plumbers checked; 4 infractions. Referrals – 11 audit, 14 collections.

**Yakima to Roslyn area along I-90** (40): 59 contractors, 2 electricians, 4 plumbers checked; 8 infractions. Referrals – 9 audit, 5 collections, 1 safety.

**Walla Walla** (16): 33 contractors, 1 electrician, 2 plumbers checked; 7 infractions. Referrals – 6 audit, 6 collections, 1 safety.



## Fraud blotter: Unregistered contractors charged, sentenced

L&I and the Washington Attorney General's office have been busy holding contractors accountable for underground economy violations. Here are several recent cases prosecuted by the Attorney General based on L&I inspections and investigations into unregistered contracting and failing to pay workers' compensation insurance. You can read more about each case by clicking on "news archives" at [www.Lni.wa.gov/news/#1](http://www.Lni.wa.gov/news/#1).

**Salvador Rodriguez, owner of Chava Paving, of Vancouver.** Also known as Salvador Rodriguez Alvarez, he pleaded guilty and was sentenced in May on three counts of unregistered contracting and a felony count of doing business without workers' comp insurance. Rodriguez, 45, was sentenced, in part, to serve 30 days of work release and pay restitution to his victims and the state.

Rodriguez's company, Chava Paving, was surfacing driveways and doing other construction work in Clark County from September 2012 through June 2014 when the offenses occurred, leaving numerous customers complaining of shoddy or incomplete work.

Rodriguez owes L&I more than \$72,000. That includes \$7,300 for workers' comp premiums and \$65,000 in unpaid fines for a dozen unregistered contracting citations and one child labor citation.

**Peter Daniel Yeaman, owner of Southgate Roofing, of Belfair in Mason County.**

Yeaman, 55, faces a charge of unregistered contracting and a felony count of doing business when his workers' comp coverage was revoked.

L&I suspended Southgate Roofing's contractor registration in November 2012 for failing to pay workers' comp premiums, and later officially revoked the company's workers' comp coverage. Nonetheless, charging papers said, L&I found two consumers in Silverdale who had work done by the company in 2014. That August, Yeaman told an L&I inspector he needed to pay a bill before he could register.

The criminal case is pending.

Apart from the criminal charges, L&I has cited Yeaman with six unregistered contracting and two permit-related infractions since 2013, and several safety violations in 2013. He owes the department more than \$28,000 for the unpaid fines and more than \$131,000 for unpaid workers' comp premiums, penalties and interest.

**Collin Patrick Chester, Arlington.** Chester, 43, was sentenced in March to four months in King County Jail and ordered to pay restitution for scamming consumers in two cases.

Chester had pleaded guilty earlier to two felony charges of first-degree theft. In one case, the owner of a Quality Inn in Renton paid Chester more than \$19,000 in deposits to replace his hotel roof. After delaying the job for several weeks, Chester hired a subcontractor who tore off part of the roof and then told the sub to stop unless the hotel owner paid more money than was required in the contract, court documents said. The open roof led to significant rain damage in four hotel rooms, but Chester never repaired the water damage or completed the job.

Chester, who was unregistered, had been convicted at least twice before of unregistered contracting.