California: contractor reciprocity & license-transfer checklist

Licensing board: Contractors State License Board (CSLB) · https://www.cslb.ca.gov/ · Checked November 20, 2026

> **Not legal advice.** General information only, not legal advice. Each fact is our plain-English summary of the linked official source on the date shown, and may be incomplete, out of date or wrong. Licensing rules change. Confirm with the official licensing board and a licensed professional (an attorney, and your CPA or broker for deal terms) before you act.

Moving here: reciprocity and exam waivers

- CSLB says California has formal reciprocity agreements with the contractor licensing agencies of Arizona, Louisiana, Mississippi, Nevada and North Carolina.
  General Information on Reciprocity, Contractors State License Board (CSLB): https://www.cslb.ca.gov/Contractors/Applicants/Reciprocity/General_Reciprocity_Information.aspx
- The rules are the same for each of those states: you apply in a classification on that state's Reciprocal Classifications List, you have held an active license in good standing in that state for the previous five years, your current board completes CSLB's Request for Verification of License, and you file CSLB's Application for Original Contractor's License.
  Reciprocity Requirements, Contractors State License Board (CSLB): https://www.cslb.ca.gov/Contractors/Applicants/Reciprocity/Reciprocity_Requirements.aspx
- Reciprocity is by classification, not blanket. For example, CSLB maps Arizona's C-11 Electrical to California's C-10, but the Nevada list has no C-10 Electrical or C-36 Plumbing entry, and Louisiana, Mississippi and North Carolina map only to B General Building (North Carolina also to B-2 Residential Remodeling), with a NASCLA Commercial Building exam requirement (for Mississippi, NASCLA or Mississippi's own Commercial Building exam) for the B waiver.
  Reciprocal Classifications List, Contractors State License Board (CSLB): https://www.cslb.ca.gov/Contractors/Applicants/Reciprocity/Reciprocal_Classifications_List.aspx
- If reciprocity is granted, CSLB may waive the trade exam but keeps the right to require it. You still take CSLB's Law and Business exam.
  Reciprocal Classifications List, Contractors State License Board (CSLB): https://www.cslb.ca.gov/Contractors/Applicants/Reciprocity/Reciprocal_Classifications_List.aspx
- From any state: if you passed the NASCLA Commercial General Builders exam and held a general building license (or similar) in good standing for the previous five years, you can ask for the trade-exam waiver for the B General Building class, with a signed request and your NASCLA results shared with California.
  Reciprocity Requirements, Contractors State License Board (CSLB): https://www.cslb.ca.gov/Contractors/Applicants/Reciprocity/Reciprocity_Requirements.aspx
- The underlying law lets the Registrar accept another state's qualifications case by case, only if that state accepts California's, and waive the trade exam with written certification of five years in good standing.
  Business and Professions Code section 7065.4, California Legislative Information: https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/codes_displaySection.xhtml?lawCode=BPC&sectionNum=7065.4
- Going the other way: a California contractor seeking reciprocity elsewhere asks that state for its form and has it forwarded to CSLB.
  Reciprocity Requirements, Contractors State License Board (CSLB): https://www.cslb.ca.gov/Contractors/Applicants/Reciprocity/Reciprocity_Requirements.aspx

Buying or selling a licensed business

- “No license, regardless of type or classification, shall be transferable to any other person or entity under any circumstances.” A license number can be reissued or reassigned only in narrow cases the statute lists, such as certain parent-subsidiary mergers, family members continuing a deceased or absent licensee's business, or an individual licensee forming a corporation or LLC that the individual controls by more than 50 percent.
  Business and Professions Code section 7075.1, California Legislative Information: https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/codes_displaySection.xhtml?lawCode=BPC&sectionNum=7075.1
- CSLB: if a sole owner sells the business to another individual, “the sole owner license number is not transferable and cannot be included in the sale of the business.” The new owner must get their own license before they can legally contract.
  Change in Personnel, Contractors State License Board (CSLB): https://www.cslb.ca.gov/Contractors/Maintain_License/Change_In_Personnel.aspx
- A general partnership license is tied to that exact partnership. General partners can't be added; a changed partnership needs a new license, and the old license is cancelled when a general partner leaves.
  Change in Personnel, Contractors State License Board (CSLB): https://www.cslb.ca.gov/Contractors/Maintain_License/Change_In_Personnel.aspx; Business and Professions Code section 7076, California Legislative Information: https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/codes_displaySection.xhtml?lawCode=BPC&sectionNum=7076
- Corporate officers who are not the qualifier can be added or removed without affecting a corporate license, but new officers must meet fingerprinting requirements.
  Change in Personnel, Contractors State License Board (CSLB): https://www.cslb.ca.gov/Contractors/Maintain_License/Change_In_Personnel.aspx
- A corporation's or LLC's license is cancelled on the entity's dissolution, merger, or surrender of its right to do business in California. The entity must notify the Registrar within 90 days.
  Business and Professions Code section 7076, California Legislative Information: https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/codes_displaySection.xhtml?lawCode=BPC&sectionNum=7076

When the qualifier leaves

- If the responsible managing officer, employee, member or manager (the qualifier) leaves, the licensee or the qualifier must notify the Registrar in writing within 90 days, and the licensee has 90 days from the disassociation to replace the qualifier. If not replaced, the license is automatically suspended or the classification removed.
  Business and Professions Code section 7068.2, California Legislative Information: https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/codes_displaySection.xhtml?lawCode=BPC&sectionNum=7068.2; Change in Personnel, Contractors State License Board (CSLB): https://www.cslb.ca.gov/Contractors/Maintain_License/Change_In_Personnel.aspx
- One 90-day extension may be granted for good cause in limited situations (a disputed disassociation date, the qualifier's death, or a processing delay outside the applicant's control). In the first two situations the total is capped at 180 days.
  Business and Professions Code section 7068.2, California Legislative Information: https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/codes_displaySection.xhtml?lawCode=BPC&sectionNum=7068.2
- Any other change to recorded information, including personnel, business name and address, must be reported within 90 days.
  Business and Professions Code section 7083, California Legislative Information: https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/codes_displaySection.xhtml?lawCode=BPC&sectionNum=7083

Deadlines (calendar days from the event date; write in your dates)

Event	Period	What is due	Your date
Qualifier (RMO/RME/RMM) leaves the licensed business	90 days	Written notice of the disassociation must reach CSLB (Disassociation Request)	_____
Qualifier (RMO/RME/RMM) leaves the licensed business	90 days	Replacement qualifier must be in place, or the license is suspended or the class removed	_____
Qualifier (RMO/RME/RMM) leaves the licensed business	180 days	Outside limit if CSLB grants the one 90-day extension (disputed date or qualifier's death)	_____
Change in personnel, business name or address	90 days	Notify CSLB of the change in writing on its form	_____
General partner leaves or partnership dissolves	90 days	Written notice must reach CSLB (late notice makes the receipt date the cancellation date)	_____
General partner leaves or partnership dissolves	90 days	Last day for a written continuance request to finish projects in progress	_____
Licensed corporation or LLC dissolves, merges or surrenders its right to do business	90 days	Notify the Registrar in writing	_____

Checklist

☐ Looked up the license on the CSLB site: legal entity, number, classes, status, expiration, qualifier.

☐ Decided deal structure (asset purchase vs. buying the licensed entity) with counsel.

☐ Confirmed whether the qualifier stays after closing; calendared the notice and replacement dates above.

☐ Started the buyer's own license application, if needed, before closing.

☐ Checked exam waivers or endorsement for the buyer's qualifier on both boards' pages.

☐ Arranged bonds and insurance in the licensee's exact legal name.

☐ Confirmed every date with CSLB and a licensed professional.

Notes

Free from Contractor Reciprocity (https://contractor-reciprocity.pages.dev), run by Diamond Ray Inc, support@liteflow.app. Facts checked November 20, 2026. General information only, not legal advice. Each fact is our plain-English summary of the linked official source on the date shown, and may be incomplete, out of date or wrong. Licensing rules change. Confirm with the official licensing board and a licensed professional (an attorney, and your CPA or broker for deal terms) before you act. Not affiliated with, endorsed by or sponsored by any state licensing board, government agency or NASCLA. Board names are used only to identify the official sources we cite.