



## Frequently asked questions about the licensed contractor advertising guidelines

### 1. Q: Which licence number are you referring to?

A: The licence number in these regulation changes and advertising guidelines is your Technical Safety BC licensed contractor number in the format LXX1234567, which is issued to your company. It is not your or your employee's individual certification number or your municipal business licence number.

### 2. Q: Who do the changes apply to?

A: The changes apply to licensed contractors in electrical, gas, boiler, pressure vessels and refrigeration, and elevating. The advertising guidelines apply to all contractors, regardless of size or geography.

The regulation (and therefore the guidelines) do not apply to licensed contractors that only perform regulated work for their own organization, and do not offer or advertise services to the public. Examples of organizations that might fit this description include municipalities, school districts, utilities, government crown corporations (e.g. BC Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure), and large operating permit holders (i.e. saw mills, mining operations, ski resorts).

### 3. Q: What forms of advertising do the changes apply to?

A: Technical Safety BC has developed a set of advertising guidelines to support contractors in interpreting the new rules. The guidelines contain a clear definition of what "advertising" means and which forms of advertising apply. [Click here to view the detailed advertising guidelines.](#)

### 4. Q: How will Technical Safety BC assess and manage licensed contractor compliance with these changes?

A: We're currently focused on helping licensed contractors understand the changes and how they will need to apply them. Part of this is encouraging licensed contractors to add their licence number to their advertising materials to differentiate themselves from unlicensed contractors.

In addition, we are actively identifying and contacting unlicensed contractors advertising regulatory services.



**5. Q: When will the changes be phased in?**

A: Implementation began on January 1, 2023. Contractors shared that some changes are easier to apply than others and that phasing in the guidelines would be helpful, so the initial phase of implementation focused on digital forms of advertising (e.g. online marketplaces, directories, digital ads, social media).

On September 30, 2023, we launched the second phase of the regulation, which requires contractors to add their licence number on all print materials, such as stationery or business cards.

In addition to digital and print materials, contractors are encouraged to add their licence number to larger assets such as company branded vehicles and storefronts. In response to industry feedback, we made this voluntary in October 2023, however it is strongly encouraged to help both us and the public identify unlicensed work in the province.

[Click here to view the implementation timeline.](#)

**6. Q: How will Technical Safety BC assess my company's compliance?**

A: Technical Safety BC will encourage contractors to comply with the guidelines over the implementation period. The more licensed contractors that comply, the more impact this regulatory change will have towards the public being able to differentiate your business from an unlicensed contractor. We will consider whether you are making a reasonable attempt to comply with the regulation as supported by the guidelines in your overall advertising activities.

**7. Q: What happens if I don't comply with the guidelines, are they enforceable?**

A: Compliance is required with the Safety Standards Act and Safety Standards General Regulations. Non-compliance with this legislation is an administrative non-compliance and is subject to Monetary Penalty. The Advertising Guidelines are provided to assist licensed contractors in understanding the considerations around how Technical Safety BC will assess compliance of licensed and unlicensed contractors.



**8. Q: I added my licence number to my vehicle because I thought it was required. Why did you make it optional?**

A: While adding your TSBC licence number to your vehicle and storefront is now optional, it is strongly encouraged.

Adding your licence number has multiple benefits. It demonstrates to your clients that you're registered as a licensed contractor with TSBC, provides us with additional ways to investigate and enforce against unlicensed workers who are promoting illegal work, and most importantly, it helps the public understand who they can trust to perform services safely. The public can now easily look up licensed contractors through our online [Find a Licensed Contractor](#) tool.

**9. Q: I already publish my contractor's licence number in my advertising materials, but the number is in a different format, what do I do?**

A: Many licensed contractors already publish their licence number. We recommend that you adjust the licence number format on your digital advertising and make a plan to update the format of your licence number on other documents and advertising assets over time.

**10. Q: I have a unique situation and I don't feel the Guidelines practically apply; can I apply for an exemption?**

A: The Guidelines were created to identify exemptions that were not practical to implement or manage compliance with. The regulation further enables a licensed contractor to apply for an exemption for a specific instance of advertising. Exemptions may be granted by a Safety Manager. Please consider the Guidelines before requesting an exemption. To request an exemption, contact [enforcement@technicalafetybc.ca](mailto:enforcement@technicalafetybc.ca).

**11. Q: Can I use Technical Safety BC's logo in my company advertising?**

A: We appreciate that contractors recognize the value of being associated with Technical Safety BC and being a licensed contractor. We have created a TSBC decal that is specifically for licensed contractors to display that is available for download [here](#). Before including the decal on your advertising materials, please review our [Advertising Guidelines webpage](#) for conditions of use.



**12. Q: How will Technical Safety BC make the public aware of the changes?**

A: Technical Safety BC will connect with contractors in the following ways:

- communication through association and municipal partners;
- potential media/press release;
- social media campaign; and
- paid digital advertising campaign.

**13. Q: What should I do if I see advertising and suspect that the contractor is unlicensed?**

A: Continue to report these instances through the [report an incident process](#). Provide as much detail as possible, including details, links, or photos of the advertisement and company name and contact details where available. This helps us investigate and follow up.

**14. Q: What is the first thing I need to do?**

A: We recommend considering the following:

- Consider the forms of advertising your business currently uses.
- Review the Guidelines to determine how they impact your advertising activities.
- Make a plan to update your advertising materials.

**15. Q: Industry associations publish membership lists and directories. Will industry associations have any requirements to follow in this change, or is the business owners responsible to make these changes?**

A: The guidelines distinguish between online directories (which promote the sale of regulated services), and membership lists (which publish a list of members). The guidelines recommend including the licence number if the primary purpose of publishing member information is to advertise and offer regulated services for sale and provide an exemption if this is not the primary purpose. In either case, it is the responsibility of the licensed contractor to ensure their company is aligned with the legislation.



**16. Q: How will this regulatory change apply to companies that offer services across Canada and the US? We only have one website/set of social media channels/fleet of company vehicles for the entire organization vs. per province.**

A: The legislation applies within BC and does not apply to other jurisdictions your company may operate within. Where your company offers regulated services for sale in BC, the guidelines recommend that your company include your licence number on your company website and in your company social media profile. If you use certain company vehicles primarily within BC, the guidelines recommend that your company include your licence number on the vehicle. We will consider whether you are making a reasonable attempt to comply with the regulation as supported by the guidelines in your overall advertising activities.

**17. Q: Is there any way for public to check if a licence is valid?**

A: Yes, the current [Find a Licensed Contractor](#) lookup on the Technical Safety BC webpage enables you to search by company name or licence number. The lookup contains all active licensed contractors. There are several ways to search for licensed contractors using this tool including by name, partial name, licence number, or by head office location. This webpage is currently being redesigned and we plan to release an improved version in the fall of 2022.

**18. Q: When I search by location on the Find a Licensed Contractor lookup, my company doesn't show up.**

A: The [Find a Licensed Contractor](#) lookup page is populated by your company office address as listed with Technical Safety BC and does not show all areas that your company may operate within. We understand the value that this lookup tool has to the public and your business; this is an improvement that is being considered in future iterations of this tool.

**19. Q: Will licensed contractors be able to use the Technical Safety BC logo?**

A: We have created a TSBC decal options that is specifically for licensed contractors to display for advertising and is available for download [here](#). Before including the decal on your advertising materials, please review our [Advertising Guidelines webpage](#) for conditions of use.



**20. Q: “TSBC# LXX1234567” is likely more doable for ad space. Can we remove the word “Licence” or adjust how we publish the licence number?**

A: The guidelines recommend this licence number format to create as much consistency as possible among contractor advertisements. The Find a Licensed Contractor lookup site works best with this licence number format. We consider whether you are making a reasonable attempt to comply with the regulation as supported by the guidelines in your overall advertising activities.

**21. Q: Does the licence number have to be 7 digits? Ours is only 6.**

A: Technical Safety BC’s systems work on a 7-digit licence number. While you may be used to using fewer digits, a 7-digit number is consistent across technologies. If you have a shorter licence number, we recommend placing prefix zeros in front. The licence number format is important as it matches with the format of the licence number used in the [Find a Licensed Contractor](#) lookup webpage. If the format LXX123456 is used, your company may not show up on the lookup results.

**22. Q: How does Technical Safety BC classify paid search ads? We use paid search digital ads across several provinces and putting a Technical Safety BC Licence # on would cause confusion to the rest of our audience.**

A: Where it is possible to target your ads within BC, the guidelines recommend that you include your Technical Safety BC licence number. We realize it may not be practical to comply with the regulation and align with the guidelines in all instances, and we do not intend for the guidelines to address every possible situation. We will consider whether you are making a reasonable attempt to comply with the regulation as supported by the guidelines in your overall advertising activities.

**23. Q: What about advertising on Google (i.e., Google My Business, Yelp), where those sites have created a profile for my business that I didn’t set up, don’t pay for, don’t manage and/or don’t want and I don’t have access to make changes to it. What am I responsible for in this case?**

A: We understand that these kinds of listings get created by websites and search functions, often not at your request. For websites, ads, and social media profiles that you do have control



over, the guidelines recommend you include your licence number. We realize it may not be practical to comply with the regulation and align with the guidelines in all instances, and we do not intend for the guidelines to address every possible situation. We will consider whether you are making a reasonable attempt to comply with the regulation as supported by the guidelines in your overall advertising activities.

**24. Q: Does Technical Safety BC have information we can easily share with our potential customers that explains the importance of obtaining a permit?**

A: You can point your customers to the [Home Renovations FAQ](#) on our website to share information on why they need a licensed contractor and why permits are necessary. If you have ideas on how to share this information with your customers better, please email us at [engage@technicalsaftybc.ca](mailto:engage@technicalsaftybc.ca) with your thoughts.

**25. Q: How will Technical Safety BC educate the public about the importance of using a licensed contractor and obtaining a permit?**

A: Technical Safety BC conducts public communication campaigns aimed at increasing public knowledge of the risks of working with unlicensed contractors and not obtaining a permit. We will continue existing outreach and public education activities including presence at home shows, fairs, festivals. In support of these legislative changes, there will be a public information campaign/media release starting in January 2023 that addresses the importance of hiring a licensed contractor, and how to determine if a contractor has a licence (viewing the new public registry on our website, checking advertising materials for a licence number).

**26. Q: How will Technical Safety BC monitor advertising of unlicensed contractors? (e.g., unlicensed contractor advertisements on Craigslist)?**

A: In 2023, Technical Safety BC plans to initiate a focused campaign to identify and investigate contractors who appear to be advertising without a licence (where no licence number is published in their advertising). The campaign will initially focus on digital marketing channels including online classified sites and social media. As the guidelines are phased in, the scope of investigations is expected to expand. As always, contractors and members of the public can continue to report suspected unlicensed activity via Technical Safety BC's [report an incident](#) process.



**27. Q: Will Technical Safety BC compensate contractors for the cost of compliance with this legislative change?**

A: Technical Safety BC does not support the cost of compliance to participate in the safety system.

**28. Q: What are the consequences of not complying with these changes?**

A: Technical Safety BC intends to encourage and support contractors to implement the guidelines for the benefit of the entire industry. We intend to focus our compliance and enforcement efforts on identifying and investigating unlicensed contractors that are advertising regulated services. However, Technical Safety BC retains the ability to leverage our enforcement tools, which include compliance orders, discipline orders and monetary penalties. The maximum monetary penalty Technical Safety BC may issue under legislation is \$100,000.

**29. Q: Are there any rewards for being compliant?**

A: Publishing your contractor licence number is an immediate way to distinguish your business from an unlicensed contractor. This legislative change is one of many tools to help broaden public awareness of licensed contractors and Technical Safety BC, along with ongoing public communication activities including (but not limited to) pointing the public to the [Find a Licensed Contractor](#) lookup and the [report an incident](#) process.

**30. Q: We use subcontractors. Do we have to publish their licence numbers in our advertising?**

A: Each licensed contractor is responsible for including their own licence number on their advertising. This means that your subcontractors need to include their licence number in their advertising. If you are advertising the services of your subcontractors on their behalf, you should include the subcontractor's licence number in that advertising, but it is the responsibility of the subcontractor to ensure that you do.

**31. Q: What responsibility do we have to ensure our subcontractors are following the rules?**

A: You are only responsible for ensuring your company's advertising activities comply with the regulations, and that you hire appropriately licensed subcontractors. If you are advertising the services of your subcontractors on their behalf, you should include the subcontractor's licence



number in that advertising, but it is the responsibility of the subcontractor to ensure that you do. If you suspect that an unlicensed subcontractor is advertising, you can inform us via Technical Safety BC's [report an incident](#) process.

**32. Q: What will Technical Safety BC do if you find unlicensed contractors advertising regulated services?**

A: Technical Safety BC plans to identify and investigate unlicensed contractors found advertising regulated services. Throughout that investigation, Technical Safety BC will identify situations where unlicensed contractors could become compliant and licensed, or we may choose to leverage our enforcement tools including compliance orders, discipline orders and monetary penalties.

**33. Q: How will Technical Safety BC staff enforcement activities for this, and will this impact existing services? How many people has Technical Safety BC hired for this?**

A: Technical Safety BC has a dedicated compliance and enforcement team, which includes specialists and safety officers, separate from the local safety officers you normally work with. At this time, local safety officers will not be actively auditing the regulatory requirement during their assessments, but if they come across advertising during an assessment that does not meet the regulatory requirement or is not in alignment with recommendations contained in the guidelines, they may make you aware of the regulatory requirement and supporting guidelines.

**34. Q: It feels like the onus is being put on licensed contractors to comply with these changes in order to fix the issue with the public hiring unlicensed contractors.**

A: Safety is a shared responsibility, and licensed contractors, the public, and regulators such as Technical Safety BC all have a role to play. Licensed contractors can help by promoting their status as a licensed contractor. Technical Safety BC is planning a campaign to educate the public on the importance of hiring a licensed contractor and how to check if a contractor is licensed. These legislative changes also allow Technical Safety BC to enforce against unlicensed contractors for advertising regulated work, rather than having to wait until they have performed the work without a licence.



**35. Q: I didn't hear about the consultation before this. Participation in consultation and engagement activities for contractor advertising in 2019 and in 2022 seem low. Why did Technical Safety BC move ahead with supporting a regulatory change and implementation of guidelines?**

A: Participation in the regulatory change and guideline development process was similar to what we've seen in other consultations. Although the official consultation on the advertising guidelines has closed, we are open to input on the guidelines and will update and clarify them as needed. Before regulatory changes, Technical Safety BC consults with industry and affected people to understand how the changes impact them. We communicate opportunities to engage with us through direct emails to contractors, through industry associations that in turn can share that information with their members, through our social media channels, and other methods as are relevant to the topic. While Technical Safety BC communicates the opportunity to participate in engagement opportunities, we cannot obligate licensed contractors to participate. We are open to input on how we can increase the opportunities for contractors to engage with us.

**36. Q: Where can I find more information?**

A: If you would like to learn more, [visit our Advertising Guidelines webpage](#).