



## Unregistered contractor in Vancouver ordered to pay state \$72,000-plus

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May 22, 2015

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**Vancouver, Wash.** – A Vancouver road paver who admitted he had no contractor's license nor insurance to cover injured workers has been sentenced to pay the state more than \$72,000.

Salvador Rodriguez, 45, pleaded guilty recently to three counts of unregistered contracting and a felony count of doing business without workers' compensation insurance. Rodriguez also goes by the name of Salvador Rodriguez Alvarez.

Clark County Superior Court Judge Scott Collier ordered Rodriguez to serve 30 days of work release for the workers' comp offense. On the unregistered contracting charge, the judge sentenced Rodriguez to serve 364 days behind bars, but suspended the jail time on condition he break no laws for two years and pay restitution to the state and to his contracting victims.

The charges resulted from a Department of Labor & Industries' (L&I) investigation and numerous encounters between Rodriguez and L&I inspectors. The Washington Attorney General's office prosecuted the case.

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.

### **Ridgefield consumer paid \$33,000**

In one of the consumer incidents, in the spring of 2014, a Ridgefield property owner paid \$33,000 in advance for the company to build a retaining wall and parking pad, and spread gravel on a road, court documents said. The owner said that after five days on the job, the crew's work was so poor and incomplete that he cancelled the contract.

Rodriguez wouldn't repay any of the money, which the property owner had paid in checks written to Salvador's teenaged son, court documents said.

### **Hired workers but didn't provide workers' comp**

Rodriguez pleaded guilty to working as an unregistered contractor on this and two other projects. Though he originally registered Chava Paving in 2005, L&I suspended his contractor registration in May 2009 when his insurance and bond were cancelled. The next year, L&I revoked his workers' compensation coverage for failing to pay premiums.

Despite the revocation, L&I later found that Rodriguez was employing workers without covering them with workers' comp. The state requires employers to provide the insurance, which helps workers recover from on-the-job injuries.

**More than \$65,000 in fines**

Rodriguez owes L&I \$72,457. That includes more than \$65,000 in unpaid fines for a dozen unregistered contracting citations and one child labor citation in the past six years. In August 2013, L&I ordered Rodriguez to immediately stop work at a construction site, where two employees, ages 14 and 17, were working next to paving machines, in violation of state child labor laws.

Rodriguez also owes more than \$7,300 for workers' comp premiums.

**Protect yourself from contracting scams**

As the construction season gets underway, L&I reminds consumers to follow these steps when hiring contractors:

- Verify contractor registration.
- Get three written bids.
- Don't pay in full until the job is done to your satisfaction.
- Make payments only to the contractor's business name.
- Go to [www.ProtectMyHome.net](http://www.ProtectMyHome.net) for more tips.

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**Broadcast version:**

A Vancouver road paver who admitted he had no contractor's license nor insurance to cover injured workers has been sentenced to pay the Department of Labor and Industries more than \$72,000. Salvador Rodriguez pleaded guilty recently to three counts of unregistered contracting and a felony count of doing business without workers' compensation insurance. The investigation found that his company, Chava Paving, was surfacing driveways and doing other construction work in Clark County from 2012 to 2014 when the offenses occurred, leaving numerous customers complaining of shoddy or incomplete work. Rodriguez owes more than \$65,000 in unpaid fines for a dozen infractions and one child labor violation. He also owes more than \$7,300 for workers' comp premiums.



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