



Licenses a Commercial Contractor Needs in Illinois to Work Legally

In the state of Illinois, most [contracting specialties](#) and subspecialties require special licensing. These licenses ensure that workers have the training, education, and experience they need to finish projects according to building codes and safety standards. Here's what you need to know about contractors' licenses in Illinois.

General Contractors' Licensing

Individuals who work as general contractors in Illinois don't need state-wide licensure. They only need to comply with specific county and city regulations to keep their businesses legal. However, general contractors who want to provide certain other services, such as electrical, plumbing, or HVAC work, will need Illinois state licensure. That licensure and the processes for obtaining it differ based on the unique specialty.

Plumbing Contractors

Plumbers receive their licensure through the Illinois Department of Public Health. Every licensed plumber starts as an apprentice, which means he or she be supervised by a licensed plumber. The apprenticeship lasts four years, after which an apprentice can receive his or her own licensure. [Plumbers](#) must renew their licensure each year. Plumbing contractors are individuals who work for or through other companies, and they must register with the state, as well. The state of Illinois requires plumbing contractors to maintain minimum insurance requirements, which include general liability, bodily injury, property damage, and workers' compensation insurance.

HVAC Contractors

HVAC contractors work with heating, cooling, and ventilation systems, and some also install insulation. The State of Illinois does not require any state-wide licensure for HVAC contractors, though the local Chicago area (including the whole of Cook County) does. Here, HVAC contractors must fill out a license application, submit proof of an HVAC certificate or degree from a recognized school, and provide details regarding their professional training in HVAC, including their apprenticeships. These individuals must also take exams issued by the Chicago Department of Buildings to evaluate their knowledge of the HVAC industry and its current guidelines.

Electrical Contractors

There is no statewide code that applies to electrical contractors in the state of Illinois, but local areas like Chicago have adopted the rules of the National Electrical Code. To legally work as an electrician in the Chicagoland area, an individual must apply for and obtain a Supervising Electrician License, and this license must be renewed annually. It involves a rigorous examination that consists of 150 multiple-choice questions, and contractors must pass that exam with at least 70% of the answers correct to obtain licensure. This ensures that electrical contractors have the knowledge and experience required to work on projects safely, according to the building code. Apprentice electricians do not need licensure, but they must work alongside a licensed electrician until they receive licensure of their own.

While the state of Illinois is fairly lax in its statewide licensure requirements for [commercial contractors](#), the city of Chicago and Cook County has its own local requirements. In each case, licensure can set home and business owners' minds at ease since they ensure technicians have the required knowledge, experience, and training to perform the job safely.