

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION**  
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**CALIFORNIA ARCHITECTS BOARD**  
**OFFERS ASSISTANCE TO VICTIMS OF RECENT EARTHQUAKE**

Victims of the recent South Napa earthquake should use caution when planning the rebuilding of their homes or businesses, the California Architects Board (CAB) advised today. Doug McCauley, Executive Officer, offers the following rebuilding tips:

**Unlicensed Practice**

Only persons licensed by CAB may call themselves architects and provide architectural services. When responding to advertisements or solicitations offering architectural services, victims of the earthquake should verify whether the person offering services has a valid license. Under California law, any unlicensed person who offers and/or provides architectural services for repair to a structure damaged by a natural disaster which has been declared a state of emergency by either the President or Governor, shall be punished by a fine of up to \$10,000 or by imprisonment for up to three years.

**Release Copy of Plans**

If damage to residential real property is caused by a natural disaster declared by the Governor, and if the damage may be covered by insurance, an architect or other person who has prepared the plans used for the construction or remodeling of the property must release a copy of the plans to the homeowner or a homeowner's insurer, or a duly authorized agent of either, upon request. The plans may only be used for verifying the amount of damage for insurance purposes. The plans cannot be used to rebuild any part of the property without prior written consent of the architect or other person who prepared the plans. If the architect of record is unavailable, a homeowner should contact the local building department to inquire if they have a copy of the plans on file.

**Requirements**

- It may not be necessary to hire an architect to design a single family residence. Individuals are advised to contact their local building officials for clarification of the requirements for their project.
- It may not be possible to recreate the home or business as it existed prior to the earthquake. Many buildings destroyed by earthquakes were designed years ago and the building codes may no longer be applicable.
- Conditions that existed prior to the earthquake may also necessitate new building codes. Local building officials will be the source of the most accurate and up-to-date requirements.

**Consumer Information**

To verify a license, obtain the complaint history of an architect, or to review the booklet, *Consumer's Guide to Hiring an Architect*, visit our website at [www.cab.ca.gov](http://www.cab.ca.gov), or call the CAB at the toll-free number installed to aid victims of natural disasters: 1-800-991-2223. The booklet outlines information on how to find and hire an architect, lists steps to take in negotiating a contract, and offers general suggestions to assist in the planning process.