



## CAN I CALL MYSELF AN ARCHITECT?

### Misrepresentation and Unlicensed Practice

The Board is keenly aware of the importance of the correct use of the “A” word—architect or architecture, and that architects have worked hard to obtain the license. Additionally, the Board recognizes your comments and frustration regarding other professions using the “A” word too. The Board continues to advocate for the architecture profession, and to protect the term *architect* as allowed by the [Architects Practice Act](#).

**California Law:** Defines the practice of architecture as the planning of sites, and the design, in the whole or in part, of buildings or groups of buildings and structures. Any person who uses the title of “architect” (or any term confusingly similar) or advertises to provide architectural services in California must be licensed as an architect by the Board. The Board has a helpful [Design Limitations Chart for Professionals](#) that specifies the types of projects that may be designed by an unlicensed individual. It also specifies the limitations placed on other licensed [design professionals](#).

**Candidates for Licensure:** Candidates are cautioned that offering or providing architectural services or using any form of the term “architect” (including “architectural,” “architecture,” or any abbreviations or confusingly similar variations) in their titles or to describe their services, prior to obtaining a California architect license, may result in enforcement action and/or the denial of a license.

**Employers:** Employers at architectural firms should also be careful when selecting job titles for their unlicensed employees. The use of any form of the term “architect” in an unlicensed employee’s job title or description is strictly prohibited.

**Licensees:** Licensees should make every effort to renew their licenses timely. The failure to renew an architect license places a licensee in a delinquent or expired status meaning they are “unlicensed” and cannot use the title “architect” or provide any architectural services. The 30-day grace period after a license expires applies **only** to the delinquency fee and **does not permit** the holder of an expired license to continue practicing architecture after the expiration date has passed.

**Filing a Complaint Against an Unlicensed Person:** If you believe that an unlicensed person may be misrepresenting themselves as an architect and/or offering or providing architectural services in California, you are encouraged to file a complaint with the Board by submitting a [Consumer Complaint Form](#) and any supporting documentation (i.e., copy of the advertisement, written contract, or drawings). You may remain anonymous. Further information regarding the complaint process may be obtained by contacting the [Board](#).

**Email:** [cab@dca.ca.gov](mailto:cab@dca.ca.gov)

**Phone:** (916) 574-7220

**Hours:** 8:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m.

**Days:** Monday–Friday (except [state holidays](#))