

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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**CALIFORNIA ARCHITECTS BOARD**  
**ASSISTS VICTIMS OF RECENT SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA WILDFIRES**

Victims of the Southern California wildfires 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 Architects**

Only persons licensed by CAB may call themselves architects and provide architectural services. When responding to advertisements or solicitations offering architectural services, wildfire victims 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 is a Governor or President proclaimed state of emergency, shall be punished by a fine of up to \$10,000 or by imprisonment for up to three years.

**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 before the fires. Many buildings destroyed by the fires were designed years ago to conform to building codes that have long since been changed.

**Release of Copy of Plans**

If damage to a 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 the homeowner's insurer for use in verifying the amount of damages for insurance purposes. If the architect is unavailable, a homeowner should contact the local building department to see if they have a copy of the plans on file.

**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 Web site at [www.cab.ca.gov](http://www.cab.ca.gov) or call CAB at the toll-free number (800) 991-2223 to request information. The booklet outlines information on how to find and hire an architect, steps to take in negotiating a contract, and offers general suggestions to assist in the planning process.