COMPLIANCE

LICENSES, PERMITS, LEAD AND VEHICLES

The rules that catch contractors are often the ones nobody thought applied to them.

BUILD A COMPLIANCE CALENDAR

Most compliance failures aren't defiance. Something expired, the person who tracked it left, or a new hire didn't know. Create one spreadsheet or software list with every license, certificate, insurance policy and registration in your business. For each, record the owner, the expiration date, the renewal steps, and the person responsible. Set reminders 90, 60 and 30 days ahead.

CONTRACTOR AND TRADE LICENSES

Rules vary widely by state, county and city. Make sure you know:

- Which license your business needs in each place you work
- Who the qualifying person is, and what happens if they leave
- Which work each technician may legally do
- How apprentices must be supervised
- Continuing education requirements and deadlines
- How your license number must appear in advertising and on trucks

Your qualifying license holder is a single point of failure. If that person quits or dies, you may have limited time to replace them. Have a backup in training.

PERMITS AND INSPECTIONS

Pulling permits protects both you and your customer. Skipping them can create problems with insurance, resale and your license. Build permit status into the job

record. Define who pulls it, who schedules the inspection and who closes it out. Open permits have a way of surfacing years later. Tell the customer what's required, and include the cost in your price.

EPA SECTION 608 FOR REFRIGERANT

Technicians who handle regulated refrigerants need Section 608 certification appropriate to the equipment. Apprentices are exempt only when closely and continually supervised by a certified technician. Refrigerant sales are restricted to certified technicians. Keep copies of certifications, follow recovery requirements and maintain the records required of your work. Check for changes under the AIM Act, including handling of A2L refrigerants.

LEAD-SAFE WORK IN OLDER HOMES

This one surprises people. EPA's Renovation, Repair and Painting Rule covers more than painters. In general, anyone paid to perform work that disturbs paint in housing and child-occupied facilities built before 1978 must be certified, and EPA specifically names plumbers and electricians, and HVAC professionals are also covered.

The rule includes:

- Firm certification, plus trained certified renovators
- Giving the occupants the Renovate Right pamphlet before work begins
- Lead-safe work practices and required cleanup
- Records

There's a minor-repair exception for disturbing six square feet or less per room inside, or 20 square feet or less outside. It doesn't apply to window replacement, or to projects involving demolition or prohibited practices. Cutting a wall to run a line, or moving a register, can add up. Some states run their own program. Ask at booking when the home was built, and flag pre-1978 homes for the tech.

TRUCKS AND DRIVERS

If you have a vehicle or combination with a gross rating or weight of 10,001 pounds or more, used in interstate commerce, federal motor carrier rules may require a USDOT number and other compliance. A service truck pulling a trailer can reach that weight surprisingly easily. Some states apply similar rules within the state. Check with your insurer or a DOT compliance adviser.

For all drivers:

- Check motor vehicle records when hiring and periodically, in line with applicable law
- Keep up with maintenance and retain the records
- Set a written policy on phones, passengers and personal use

INSURANCE AND CERTIFICATES

Review general liability, workers' compensation, commercial auto and any umbrella coverage at least once a year. Tell your broker what you actually do, particularly if you add a trade or a service. Use certificates for subcontractors, and don't let one lapse.

KEEP RECORDS YOU CAN FIND

Store licenses, certificates, training logs, permits, contracts and safety records somewhere shared and backed up. If an inspector or an attorney asks, you should be able to produce it within minutes.

WHO OWNS IT

Assign one person. They don't need to be a lawyer. They need a list, the authority to get people to respond, and a monthly slot on the leadership agenda. Check what's changing regularly, too. This guide is general information. Rules vary by location, so verify them with your attorney, licensing board or insurer.

Sources: EPA Section 608; EPA RRP program; EPA Small Entity Compliance Guide; FMCSA, USDOT numbers.

Published by Service ProCall. Last reviewed November 2026. General information, not legal advice.

BEST PRACTICES: CALLING RULES AND COMPLIANCE

MAKE IT A HABIT

What good looks like

> Consent recorded for every text and marketing call.

> Do-not-call lists checked before every campaign.

> Opt-outs honored right away, in every channel.

The habits

1. Scrub lists against the national and state do-not-call registries before calling.
2. Keep a record of consent for marketing texts and calls.
3. Honor opt-outs fast, however the customer asks.
4. Call only within allowed hours in the customer's time zone.
5. Watch the Updates page for rule changes and dates.
6. Ask your attorney when a rule is unclear.

Signs it's time to get help

- You don't know when your lists were last scrubbed.
- Opt-outs are tracked in someone's head.
- Marketing texts go out without recorded consent.

Where we fit: Service ProCall scrubs every list against the do-not-call registries before a single call, and follows a written calling policy.

More on calling rules and compliance