



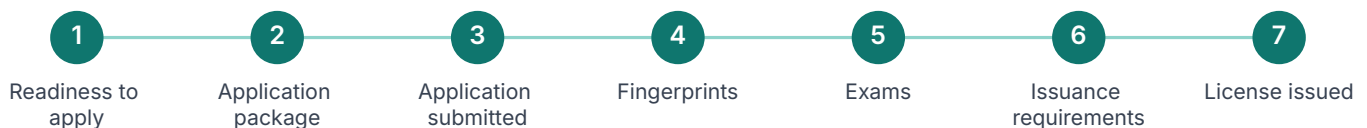
The typical path to a California contractor license

Seven steps, from getting ready to apply to the day CSLB issues your license. This is a paper version of License Path, the step-by-step checklist in your free Test2Pro account.

The case this checklist follows

- You apply as a sole owner, for one classification.
- You are the qualifying individual: your own experience qualifies the license.
- Your experience comes from work as a journey-level employee.
- You take the CSLB exams.

Is your case different? Look for the "Your path may differ" notes. License Path asks a few questions and shows the steps and forms for your own case.



1 Readiness to apply

Make sure you can apply and that the classification fits your work.

- ☐ You are at least 18 years old.
- ☐ You have at least 4 years of journey-level or higher experience in this classification within the last 10 years.
- ☐ Someone who knows your work firsthand, such as a past employer or supervisor, can certify that experience. A character reference is not enough.
- ☐ You read CSLB's description of your classification, and it covers the work you plan to do.

Your path may differ

The person whose experience qualifies the license does not have to be you. It can be an employee or an officer of your company. Some classifications also add their own requirements. License Path adds those items when you pick your classification.

2 Application package

Prepare your experience proof and the application. Send only what your application type needs.

EXPERIENCE PROOF

- ☐ Your certifier agreed to sign.
- ☐ The Certification of Work Experience form is filled in and signed.

APPLICATION

- ☐ The original contractor license application is filled in. Names, dates and signatures match on every form.
- ☐ The application fee is ready: \$450 for one classification.
- ☐ You checked the mailing instructions, signatures and dates before sending.

Not yet: bond and license fee

The contractor bond and the initial license fee come later, in step 6. Do not send them with the application.

Your path may differ

Your proof changes if your experience comes from foreman or supervisor work, your own contractor license, owner-builder projects, or education or apprenticeship credit. An LLC, or an application with additional personnel, needs extra forms. License Path asks two questions and lists only the documents for your case.

3 Application submitted

Send the package, then keep track of it.

- ☐ You sent the application package to CSLB.
- ☐ You saved the Application Fee Number and PIN from CSLB's acknowledgement letter. You need them to check your status online.
- ☐ If CSLB returns the application, you fix every listed item before the deadline in the letter.

Your exam deadline

Once CSLB accepts your application, you have 18 months to pass your exams. After that the application is void, and you apply again with new fees.

4 Fingerprints

Get fingerprinted after CSLB sends you instructions.

- ☐ You received CSLB's fingerprint instructions. Wait for them before you go.
In the typical case, only you are fingerprinted. With an LLC or additional personnel, the instructions name everyone who must be.
- ☐ You were fingerprinted at a Live Scan site in California.
Out of state, or can't use Live Scan? CSLB's instructions explain hard-copy fingerprint cards.
- ☐ You kept proof that it is done.

5 Exams

Schedule with PSI, study, and pass every required exam.

- ☐ CSLB mailed you the Notice to Schedule for Examination.
- ☐ You booked each exam with PSI and paid PSI's fee. Each exam has its own fee.
Usually that is Law & Business and the trade exam for your classification. CSLB's notice lists yours.
- ☐ You studied each exam's topic areas with the free CSLB study guide.

- ☐ You passed every required exam.

Each exam allows 3.5 hours. If you fail, you can retake it after 21 days, as long as your 18 months have not run out.

6 Issuance requirements

After you pass, finish what CSLB needs before it issues the license.

- ☐ You paid the initial license fee: \$200 for a sole owner.
- ☐ Your contractor bond is in place.
- ☐ You have workers' compensation insurance, or you filed an exemption because you have no employees.
C-20, C-39 and a few other classifications need coverage even with no employees.
- ☐ You completed the asbestos open-book exam.

Your path may differ

A bond of qualifying individual is added when an employee qualifies the license, and in some corporations. An LLC needs an extra LLC bond and liability insurance, and its initial license fee is \$350. License Path asks and adds only the items that apply to you.

7 License issued

- ☐ CSLB issued your license.
- ☐ CSLB's Check a License page shows your license as active.

Numbers in this checklist

VALUE	WHAT IT IS	SOURCE	CHECKED
\$450	CSLB application fee (original license, one classification)	CSLB: List of All Fees	Oct 24, 2026
\$200	CSLB initial license fee, sole owner	CSLB: List of All Fees	Oct 24, 2026
\$350	CSLB initial license fee, partnership, corporation or LLC	CSLB: List of All Fees	Oct 24, 2026
4 years	Journey-level experience required to qualify for a license	CSLB: Apply for a Sole Owner License	Oct 24, 2026
10 years	Period in which the required experience must fall	CSLB: Apply for a Sole Owner License	Oct 24, 2026
18 months	Time to pass the exams after CSLB accepts the application	CSLB Examinations FAQ	Oct 24, 2026
3.5 hours	CSLB exam: time allowed per exam	CSLB Examinations FAQ	Oct 24, 2026
21 days	Wait before retaking a failed CSLB exam	CSLB Examinations FAQ	Oct 24, 2026

Fees and rules can change. Check the CSLB page before you pay or send anything.

This checklist vs License Path

License Path is the same seven steps inside your free Test2Pro account. It adapts them to your answers and keeps track of your CSLB application for you.

	THIS CHECKLIST	LICENSE PATH
The seven steps, from readiness to an issued license	✓	✓
Steps and forms for your own case: experience source, LLC or additional personnel, qualifier bond, classification rules	Typical case only	✓
CSLB status check from your application number and PIN: application status and exam date	—	Limited free check
The date your application becomes void, with a countdown, and repeat CSLB checks	—	With a course
Your CSLB exam status next to your Test2Pro study progress	—	With a course
Languages	English	English, Spanish, Chinese, Russian
Price	Free	First 3 steps free with an account. The later steps come with a course.

LICENSE PATH

Track your own application, step by step

Create a free account and answer a few questions. The first 3 steps are free.

[Start License Path free](#)



Scan to start

Test2Pro does not submit applications; CSLB handles licensing.