



# PRESS RELEASE **County of Los Angeles** **Department of Public Works**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Contact: Carmen Navarro**  
**cnavarro@dpw.lacounty.gov**  
**(626) 458-3566**  
**OR**  
**Kathy Salama**  
**ksalama@dpw.lacounty.gov**  
**(626) 458-2118**

## **LEGAL TIPS for Contractors**

The County of Los Angeles Department of Public Works (Public Works) continues to assist small business in making sure they are given the proper resources to be a successful vendor by providing monthly tips. Below are legal tips for contractors written by Benjamin Martin, Esq.

1. Your legal ownership status is a big deal. Only Corporations and Limited Liability Companies (LLCs) have liability protection. Partnerships may be the worst way of owning a business because of increased personal liability. Know your status, you don't want to have to change it on the fly.
2. Make sure you have a signed contract. Your invoice or purchase orders are not contracts. They are evidence of your deal, but they don't include key terms that are always needed for your protection.
3. When you finally win the bid and sign the contract with the government, remember that the contract deal is usually not just the only thing you agree to. Often included are huge amounts of key terms that are actually rules, standards, specifications, laws and regulations that are referred to or "incorporated by reference." Look them up, because you're agreeing to them too, even though they aren't written out for you.
4. Make sure all the things you discussed and agreed to verbally, are actually in the written contract. If it's not in writing and in the contract, then you don't have it.

(more)

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5. Learn how disputes are settled. You need to know the process of how to register a complaint and how to get things resolved if a disagreement arises. Know this before signing.
6. Make sure you keep communicating. Know who to contact for normal questions as well as those unwelcomed surprises. Personal contact and frequent communication keep you away from situations that become expensive and unnecessary disputes.
7. NEVER bid on jobs without doing enough homework to make sure you will make a clear profit! There is no do-over, if you agree to a price that does not bring in enough money.... That's your problem. You will have to do the job at a loss.

**By Benjamin Martin, Esq.**

Small Business Development Center hosted by Mt. San Antonio College  
5200 Irwindale Ave., Suite 140 Irwindale, CA 91706  
Tel: (626) 337-2101 Fax: (626) 337-2104  
[www.SanGabrielValleySBDC.com](http://www.SanGabrielValleySBDC.com)

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