

*** NEWS RELEASE ***

UNLICENSED CONTRACTOR SENTENCED FOR FAILING TO SECURE WORKERS' COMPENSATION INSURANCE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 4, 2018

**CONTACT: John F. Hubanks, Deputy District Attorney
(831) 755-5128**

Monterey County District Attorney Dean D. Flippo announced today that on August 28, 2018, Jose Maria Lopez Sarabia, a 34-year-old Watsonville resident, pled guilty to two misdemeanor charges for contracting without a license and failing to secure workers' compensation insurance for his employees. Judge Elisabeth Mineta sentenced Lopez to 3 years probation and ordered to pay a \$10,000 fine.

The criminal charges against Lopez arose from a joint sting operation conducted by the California Contractors' State Licensing Board and the Monterey County District Attorney's Office on June 20 and 21, 2018. The sting operation targeted individuals, like Lopez, who were falsely marketing themselves to the public, through social media and other means, as licensed contractors. During the sting, the CSLB investigator posed as a Monterey homeowner and met with various suspects who placed bids for work that required a contractor license. On June 21, 2018, Lopez arrived at this home, where he made a \$5,600 bid for work and labor on a kitchen remodel. Since the bid was over \$500, the work required a contractor license, and Lopez received a citation for unlicensed contracting, a violation of Business & Professions Code section 7028(a). In addition, he was charged with failing to have workers' compensation insurance, a violation of Labor Code section 3700.5.

This case was investigated by the Contractors State Licensing Board with assistance from District Attorney Investigative Captain Ryan McGuirk.