



LANDSCAPE CONTRACTING and YARD MAINTENANCE WORK

What is the Difference?

A landscape contractor is a person who prepares the land, does the planning and installs lawns, shrubs, trees and other nursery stock on residential or commercial property. The person also installs water features, irrigation systems, fences, decks, arbors, patios, landscape edging, walkways, driveways and retaining walls. This work, if done for compensation, requires that the person work for or own a landscaping business that is licensed with the Oregon Landscape Contractors Board (LCB). This license is in addition to any local business licenses that may be required in your area.



Yard maintenance work is unregulated in Oregon and does not require a license with the state of Oregon (local business license may be required). This work is performed on an existing landscape and includes: mowing, pruning (up to 15 feet from ground), edging, power sweeping, raking, fertilizing, barkdusting and the planting of annuals and perennials in existing beds (limited). The repair of irrigation or drainage systems, the building of retaining walls, or other construction work is not included.

However, a person doing yard maintenance work can replace existing lawns, trees and shrubs to a limit of \$500.00 per job site per year without obtaining a state license with the LCB.

SO YOU WANT TO BECOME A LANDSCAPE CONTRACTOR?

If you are a person who:

- likes to work outside in any weather;
- likes hard physical work,
- likes working with people; and
- may want to someday own your own business (be your own boss),

then this industry has a lot to offer you.



You may not make a lot of money right away but as your experience, knowledge, client base, client relationships and expertise grow your marketability will be enhanced which may, with proper business practices, lead you to your financial goals. Always remember a good business plan is the starting point of any business venture. People “do not plan to fail, they just fail to plan” (anon)



WHAT IS REQUIRED?

In order to become an individual landscape contractor in the state of Oregon you must:

1. **Qualify** to sit for the examination that is given by the Landscape Contractors Board. You qualify by demonstrating experience and/or education in the landscape field. You may qualify if you:
 - a. Have two years (24 months) of experience working for a licensed landscape business **or**
 - b. Have at least 48 months of working in a landscape related field such as landscape maintenance **or**
 - c. Have the certified landscape technician (CLT) certification with the Oregon Landscape Contractors Association (OLCA) or Associated Landscape Contractors of America (ALCA) **or**
 - d. Have a B.S., B.A., or Associates degree in landscape architecture or other landscape related field which includes a work study element to the degree **or**
 - e. Are an arborist that is licensed with the Construction Contractors Board and have a current ISA certification
2. Once you pass the examination then you will receive your individual landscape contractors license. **However,** in order to work in the state of Oregon, you must either be the owner or an employee of a licensed landscape business. The business is the entity that is required to carry the necessary bond (\$3000, \$10,000 or \$15,000 depending on the amount of work), general liability insurance (\$100,000) and worker's compensation if the business has employees. The business is also the only entity the consumer contracts with to do the work on their property.



Things you can do to prepare for this career!

- Learn to get along with others. You may work for and with lots of different and potentially difficult people
- Practice good attendance and punctuality. Your boss and clients expect you to be dependable.
- Learn appropriateness (for example: language that you use with your crew is not OK with your client)
- Start a lawn mowing service in your neighborhood
- Work for a licensed landscape contracting business. Learn how to run a business and work your way up the "ladder" in that business.
- Learn keyboarding and computer skills.
- Take college or vocational school classes in business and landscape related areas.
- Become a better writer (for bids, letters, bills and contracts)
- Learn to work on your own, meet deadlines and be organized
- Complete a two-year community college associated degree in landscape
- Become a Certified Landscape Technician through the Oregon Landscape Contractors Association (OLCA).
- Get a 4-year college degree in landscape Architecture or design



Oregon Landscape Contractors Board
235 Union Street, NE
Salem, OR 97301
Ph: (503) 986-6561; Fax: (503) 986-6582

Web: www.lcb.state.or.us