Newly Licensed in Texas? Your First-30-Days Launch Checklist

A practical launch list for new plumbing, HVAC, and electrical contractors.

You just earned the license. These are the moves that help customers find you, trust you, and actually reach you when they call. Work through it in your first month. It is useful on its own — not a sales pitch with a checklist taped on.

> This is not legal or tax advice. Rules change. Confirm the current text with TDLR, TSBPE, the Texas Comptroller, or a CPA before you print anything or collect tax. Citations are in the table and the source line at the bottom.

1. LEGAL AND ADMIN

- ☐ **Look yourself up.** Electrical and A/C: tdlr.texas.gov/LicenseSearch. Plumbing: the TSBPE public license search at vo.licensing.hpc.texas.gov. Confirm your name, company, license number, and status. Plumbers should also confirm that a certificate of insurance is on file. Use the number the rule names — the electrical contractor, the HVAC affiliated licensee, or the plumbing Responsible Master Plumber of record. Do not substitute a journeyman, apprentice, or city permit number.
- ☐ **Put your license number where Texas requires it** — ads, the truck, business cards, your website, and your quotes. Use the row that matches your trade:

TRADE	ADS AND BUSINESS CARDS	WORK VEHICLES (BOTH SIDES)	PROPOSALS, INVOICES, AND CONTRACTS
Electrical	Contractor name **and** license number. (16 TAC §73.51(e))	Company name and license number preceded by **TECL**, contrasting color, at least **2 inches** high. (16 TAC §73.51(d))	Name, address, phone, and license number, plus the TDLR notice below. (16 TAC §73.51(f))
A/C (HVAC)	The affiliated licensee's license number. TDLR prints it as **TACL / class / number / endorsement**, e.g. TACL/A/000000/C. (16 TAC §75.71(h))	Company name and the affiliated licensee's number, letters at least **2 inches** high. The rule does not require a TACL prefix on the truck. (16 TAC §75.71(g))	Company name, address, and phone, the affiliated licensee's number, and the TDLR notice below. (16 TAC §75.71(i))
Plumbing	The Responsible Master Plumber's license number, including on cards, flyers, and handouts. (22 TAC §367.10(c))	Company name and the RMP number preceded by **M**, **MPL**, or **RMP**, contrasting color, at least **2 inches** high. (22 TAC §367.10(a))	**First page**, in at least **12-point** type: the RMP's first and last name, the RMP license number, the phrase "regulated by the Texas State Board of Plumbing Examiners," and the Board's mailing address, phone, and website (tsbpe.texas.gov). (22 TAC §367.10(b))

The electrical and A/C advertising rules do not use the word "website." A company site is not listed as an exemption either. Recommended practice, not a court finding: treat your site as advertising and show the same name and number you put on cards. **TDLR notice** (electrical and A/C forms): "Regulated by The Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation, P.O. Box 12157, Austin, Texas 78711, 1-800-803-9202, 512-463-6599; website: www.tdlr.texas.gov." The A/C rule uses the same department information, with a comma before the website. **TSBPE mailing address** (Contact page, "NEW ADDRESS AS OF SEPTEMBER 2025," and the mail address on the Open Records Policy page): 7915 Cameron Road, Austin, TX 78754, (512) 936-5200, tsbpe.texas.gov. Confirm at tsbpe.texas.gov/contact before you print forms.

- ☐ **Keep the insurance your license already requires,** and have a current certificate ready. Do not put "licensed and insured" on your site, truck, or ads until you actually have a policy. **Electrical:** general liability of at least $300,000 per occurrence, $600,000 aggregate, and $300,000 products and completed operations (16 TAC §73.40). You must also carry workers' compensation or formally elect not to (Tex. Occ. Code §1305.159); if you elect out, file the online no-coverage notice with the Texas Department of Insurance. **A/C Class A:** $300,000 / $600,000 / $300,000. **Class B:** $100,000 / $200,000 / $100,000 (16 TAC §75.40). **Plumbing RMPs:** commercial general liability of not less than $300,000 for all claims arising in a one-year period, with a Board-approved certificate on file (Tex. Occ. Code §§1301.3576 and 1301.552; 22 TAC §367.6). TSBPE does not accept ACORD forms.
- ☐ **Register in the cities you will pull permits,** and ask each permit desk whether that city requires its own registration or bond. Texas does not require a state surety bond to hold an electrical, A/C, or plumbing license (the licensing statutes and rules require insurance, not a bond). Many cities do require trade-contractor registration before you can be assigned a permit. Austin is one of them (austintexas.gov, Contractor Registration). Check Austin, Round Rock, Georgetown, San Marcos, and any other city you work in.
- ☐ **Get a free EIN** from the IRS at irs.gov ("Apply for an EIN"). Do not pay a third-party website for this. Then **open a business bank account** in the company name and keep job money out of your personal account.
- ☐ **Know when sales tax applies.** Labor to repair or remodel a home or other residential property is generally not taxable. On a lump-sum residential job, you typically pay tax when you buy materials and do not charge the customer tax. On a separated residential contract, you generally collect tax on the materials line, not on labor. The total charge to repair or remodel commercial (nonresidential) property is generally taxable, and people who do that work must get a Texas sales and use tax permit (Comptroller Publication 94-116; 34 TAC §3.357). This is not tax advice. Call the Comptroller at 800-252-5555 or talk to a CPA before you tax a job or skip a permit.

2. GET FOUND

- ☐ **Create a Google Business Profile** at business.google.com. Use the owner's Google account so you own the listing. If someone helps you, add them as a manager later.
- ☐ **If you work at customers' homes,** set it up as a service-area business and hide your home address. List the cities or ZIP codes you actually serve.
- ☐ **Pick accurate categories** (Electrician, Plumber, or HVAC contractor). Add hours, services, and your license number in the description.
- ☐ **Add real photos:** the truck, job sites (with permission), before-and-after work, and your face. Google often verifies with a short video of the truck, tools, or signage. A postcard, phone, or email code is sometimes used instead. It can take a few minutes or a couple of weeks.
- ☐ **Keep your NAP consistent** — the same business name, phone, and address (or service area) on Google, your site, quotes, and directories.
- ☐ **Claim the other listings** so no one else does: Apple Business Connect (businessconnect.apple.com), Bing Places (bingplaces.com), Nextdoor Business, and a simple Yelp page.

3. DON'T MISS CALLS

- ☐ **Get a dedicated business phone number.** Keep it off your personal voicemail.
- ☐ **Record a short greeting:** your name, company, trade, and "leave a message or text this number — I'll get back to you today."
- ☐ **Turn on missed-call text-back.** If you miss a call, they automatically get a text such as: "Sorry, I'm on a job. What do you need?" Most new shops lose their first jobs this way.
- ☐ **Call back the same day,** ideally within an hour. Speed is how a new shop beats a bigger one.

4. LOOK LEGIT

- ☐ **A simple logo is enough.** Your name, your trade, and a clean mark that still reads on a truck from the street.
- ☐ **Letter or magnet both sides of the truck** with the company name and license number in the format for your trade, at least 2 inches high, in a contrasting color. That is a legal requirement, not just branding.
- ☐ **Print business cards** with your name, trade, phone, and license number.
- ☐ **Get a shirt or cap** with the company name. Plumbing company uniforms are exempt from the license-number advertising rule (22 TAC §367.10(c)(4)), but your cards and truck are not.

5. WIN QUOTES

- ☐ **Build a one-page quote form** that already includes the legal lines for your trade (see section 1). Spell out the work, the price, what is not included, the timeline, and payment terms.
- ☐ **Take before, during, and after photos of every job** (ask the customer first). You will need them for Google and for later quotes.
- ☐ **Decide how you get paid before the first job:** a card reader or invoice-pay link, and a written deposit policy. Get the agreement signed before you start.

6. GET REVIEWS

- ☐ **Ask after every finished job,** in person, then send a text with your Google review link.
- ☐ **Make that link easy to tap.** Do not pay for reviews or offer a discount in exchange — that can get the reviews removed.

7. SUPPLY HOUSES AND REFERRALS

- ☐ **Introduce yourself at the supply houses you already use** (Ferguson, Johnstone, Graybar, and the local shops). Leave cards at the counter.
- ☐ **Tell your insurance agent, bookkeeper, and a couple of property managers or builders** that you are taking work. Those people meet new homeowners first.

Want this done for you in 7 days?

Licensed & Live — a Google Business Profile you own, a one-page site with click-to-call and a quote form, missed-call text-back, review-request texts, basic branding, and a domain plus email.

licensedandlive.com
(817) 851-8676

Sources, reviewed 2026-11-24; address and bond items re-checked 2026-11-27: 16 TAC §§73.40, 73.51, 75.40, 75.71; 22 TAC §§367.6, 367.10; Tex. Occ. Code chs. 1301, 1302, and 1305; TDLR License Search, Electrician Compliance Guide, and ACR / electrical contractor apply pages; TSBPE Contact, Open Records Policy, and RMP pages; Texas Comptroller Publication 94-116 and 34 TAC §3.357; IRS EIN application; City of Austin contractor registration. No state surety bond is required to hold these licenses. Cities may still require their own registration or bond — ask the permit desk. This is a plain-language reading, not legal or tax advice. Boards and the Comptroller amend these rules — confirm the current text before you print or collect tax.