

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND
DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS REGULATION
CONTRACTORS' REGISTRATION AND LICENSING BOARD
560 JEFFERSON BOULEVARD, SUITE 100
WARWICK, RI 02886

IN THE MATTER OF:

CHRISTOPHER M. SANTOSUOSSO,
INDIVIDUALLY AND D/B/A SITES &
STRUCTURES GROUP, INC.,
D/B/A SITES & STRUCTURES GROUP, LLC,
RESPONDENT

COMPLAINTS: C-11047 & C-11091
REGISTRATION: GC-46070 (expired)

EMERGENCY ORDER SUMMARILY SUSPENDING REGISTRATION AND ANY RENEWAL THEREOF; ORDER TO SHOW CAUSE WHY REGISTRATION SHOULD NOT BE PERMANENTLY SUSPENDED AND/OR REVOKED, AND RESPONDENT FINED AND ORDERED TO CEASE AND DESIST; NOTICE OF VIOLATIONS; NOTICE OF HEARING AND APPOINTMENT OF HEARING OFFICER

Pursuant to R.I. Gen. Laws § 5-65-10(f) and § 1.12.1(b) of 440-RICR-10-00-1 (the “Regulations”), the Director of the Rhode Island Department of Business Regulation (“Department”) hereby issues this Emergency Order summarily suspending the Registration, including any renewal, of Christopher M. Santosuosso, individually, and d/b/a Sites & Structures Group, Inc. and d/b/a Sites & Structures Group, LLC (collectively, “Respondent”); Order to Show Cause why Respondent’s Registration should not be permanently suspended or revoked, and Respondent fined and ordered to cease and desist; Notice of Violations of Chapter 5-65¹ of the

¹ Certain provisions of Chapter 5-65 entitled “Contractors’ Registration and Licensing Board” have been amended by P.L. 2022, ch. 251 & 252, effective June 28, 2022.

Rhode Island General Laws and the Regulations as described below; and Notice of Hearing and Appointment of Hearing Officer (collectively the “Order”) to Respondent, pursuant to Chapter 5-65 specifically including R.I. Gen. Laws § 5-65-10(f), 440-RICR-10-00-1 (the “CRLB Regulations”), and the Administrative Procedures Act (the “APA”), R.I. Gen. Laws Chapter 42-35, specifically including R.I. Gen. Laws § 42-35-14(c). This Emergency Order is issued pursuant to the Director’s emergency authority found in R.I. Gen. Law § 5-65-10(f) having determined that Respondent is acting to the detriment of the health, welfare and safety of the general public, and continues to so threaten the public if Respondent were to remain registered by the Department.

This Order requires that Respondent appear at an Administrative Hearing before a Hearing Officer within thirty (30) days to show cause why the Hearing Officer should not issue an order permanently suspending and/or revoking Respondent’s Registration, imposing fines and that Respondent cease and desist from further acts and omissions in violation of the Act and Regulations. This Order is effective upon issuance.

The hearing will be held on December 14, 2022, at 2:00 p.m. and conducted remotely via Zoom at the following link (detailed instructions are included in the attached sheet):

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86530322801>

The Director issues this Order based upon the following.

RELEVANT LAW

1. In an emergency situation, R.I. Gen. Laws § 5-65-10(f) empowers the Director of the Department of Business Regulation, or the Director’s designee, to revoke or suspend a contractor’s registration *without a hearing* for just cause for a period of thirty (30) days “when a registrant is acting to the detriment of the health, welfare, and safety of the general public.”

2. R.I. Gen. Laws § 5-65-10(a)(1) subsections (3), (9), (11), (12), and (14) authorize the Department's State Building Office ("Office" or "SBO"), which includes the Contractors' Registration and Licensing Board ("Board"), to revoke, suspend, or refuse to issue, reinstate, or reissue a contractor's² certificate of registration if it determines, after notice and opportunity for a hearing:

- a. That the registrant or applicant has violated § 5-65-3 or any other provision of Chapter 5-65 or the Regulations.
- b. That the registrant, licensee, or applicant has engaged in conduct as a contractor that is dishonest or fraudulent that the Board or Office injurious to the welfare of the public.
- c. That a registrant has engaged in repeated acts in violation of this chapter and the Regulations inclusive of substandard workmanship and any misuse of registration.
- d. That the registrant breached a contract.
- e. That the registrant performed negligent and/or improper work.
- f. That the registrant has failed to complete a project(s) for construction or willfully failed to comply with the terms of a contract or written warranty.

² For the purposes of § 5-65-3 and the other provisions of Chapter 5-65 of the Rhode Island General Laws: "Contractor" means a person who, in the pursuit of an independent business, undertakes or offers to undertake or submits a bid, or for compensation and with or without the intent to sell the structure constructs, alters, repairs, improves, moves over public highways, roads, or streets or demolishes a structure or to perform any work in connection with the construction, alteration, repair, improvement, moving over public highways, roads, or streets or demolition of a structure, and the appurtenances thereto. For the purposes of this chapter, 'appurtenances' includes, but is not limited to, the installation, alteration, or repair of wells connected to a structure consistent with chapter 13.2 of title 46, garage, carport, porch, patio, decks, docks, sheds, tents, gazebos, walkways, fencing, driveways, retaining walls, swimming pools, sidewalks, stone/masonry walls, and parking lots. 'Contractor' includes, but is not limited to, any person who purchases or owns property and constructs, or for compensation arranges for the construction of, one or more structures." R.I. Gen. Laws § 5-65-1(7)(i) and (ii), including amendments pursuant to P.L. 2022, ch. 251 & 252 effective June 28, 2022.

3. Pursuant to R.I. Gen. Laws § 5-65-10(a)(10), the Office may take disciplinary action against a contractor who performed work, or arranged to perform work, while their registration was invalid.

4. Pursuant to R.I. Gen. Laws § 5-65-10(b), subject to providing notice and an opportunity for hearing, in addition to other remedies, when the Office has reason to believe that a person has engaged in or is engaging in any act, practice or transaction that violates Chapter 5-65 or the Regulations, the Office may order such person to cease and desist from such violation.

5. Pursuant to R.I. Gen. Laws § 5-65-10(c), a fine may be imposed for each violation of Chapter 5-65 or the Regulations.

6. R.I. Gen. Laws § 5-65-10(k) provides: “When upon investigation a complaint reveals: serious code infractions; ... abandonment of a job for a substantial period of time without apparent cause; or any other conduct detrimental to the public, the board can double the fines.”

COMPLAINTS AND INVESTIGATION

Complaint A

7. On September 8, 2022, the Board received Complaint C-11047 from homeowners, a 92-year old war veteran who is hearing impaired and his wife who is 89-years old and also has a medical condition (“Consumer A”), asserting that on or about July 21, 2021, Consumer A hired Respondent to perform work at their home in Exeter, Rhode Island (“Property A”).

8. In their complaint, Consumer A states that while they had initially proposed a remodeling of their existing home, Respondent indicated that “the home was in disrepair with failing beams and such and that he could not in good conscience construct an addition on the existing house so it would be less expensive and better to tear the entire home down and rebuild a new one.”

9. Consumer A and Respondent entered into a construction contract dated July 21, 2021, for the residential construction project (“Project A”), which included a price of \$235,000, a work commencement date of July 28, 2021, and a completion date of January 26, 2022. The contract does not contain the “notice of possible mechanic’s lien” disclosure required under R.I. Gen. Laws § 5-65-3(o).

10. Consumer A paid Respondent an initial deposit in the amount of \$20,000.00 by cashier’s check #30170276 dated July 29, 2021, and a second deposit in the amount of \$60,000.00 by cashier’s check #30171489 dated September 7, 2021.

11. In their complaint, Consumer A further asserts that Respondent commenced work on July 29, 2021, and proceeded to “demolish the house and over the next 12 months did very little to construct the new home, often starting to build and then tearing it done [sic] three times. In the end, [Respondent] ultimately breached the contract after 12 months (the house was supposed to be built in 6), having taken payments and demolish[ed] the home and then never rebuilding a new one as agreed per contract. Not only did [Respondent] neglect to build the new house but at the very end he also damaged a \$10,000 Generac generator that was attached to the old house (which seemed to be a purposeful act on his part because we were questioning why he wasn’t making progress after his innumerable excuses.”

12. Consumer A states that Respondent ceased work on June 16, 2022.

13. An Inspector of the SBO conducted an investigation during the period September 8, 2022, through October 31, 2022, including an on-site inspection of Property A on September 20, 2022. As reflected in an investigation report dated October 31, 2022 (“Investigation Report A”), the SBO Inspector confirmed that “the existing structure has been demolished, [Respondent] has cashed \$80,000.00 in checks, and has essentially walked off the project, leaving a foundation,

ICF forms buried and backfilled, leaving them useless, a Generac generator set demolished, and a 92 & 89 [year] old couple homeless.”

14. As also reflected in Investigation Report A, the Inspector observed that: “The homeowners explained their side of the story, in doing so, it was made apparent that Mr. Santosuosso indicated he was not only a GC, but was also a Licensed and Experienced Surveyor and also an Engineer, capable of providing these Professional services to [Consumer A]...”

15. An October 13, 2022, search of the Department’s contractor’s registration database revealed that Respondent Santosuosso obtained Rhode Island contractor registration GC-46070, with the company name Sites & Structures Group, Inc., on August 4, 2021 (the “Registration”), that the Registration expired on August 4, 2022, and it was not renewed and was no longer valid after that date.

16. An October 17, 2022, search of the Department’s design professional registration and licensing database revealed no records of any Respondent, including Santosuosso, as holding, or having ever held a professional land surveyor (PLS) registration or certificate of authorization (“COA”), a professional engineer (PE) registration or COA, or any other design professional registration/license or COA in the State of Rhode Island.³

17. Also during the investigation, the Inspector learned from Consumer A that Respondent had retained Michael Coates of Dreamscapes Property Maintenance (collectively “Coates Dreamscapes”), to perform land clearing, cleanup and framing for Project A. On October

³ On October 19, 2022, in response to complaints received by the Department’s Division of Design Professionals, the undersigned Interim Director of the Department issued an Order to Show Cause Why Cease and Desist and/or Other Administrative Penalties Should Not Issue asserting that Respondent has performed land surveying without a registration or COA, falsely and deceptively applied a PLS stamp on at least five (5) plans submitted to municipal officials in Rhode Island, and held himself out as a professional land surveyor without a PLS registration in violation of Chapter 5-8.1 of the Rhode Island General Laws. That administrative proceeding is currently pending before the Department. A Temporary Cease and Desist Order was issued on November 18, 2022. *In the Matter of Christopher Santosuosso, Individually and d/b/a Mammoth Associates, Inc., d/b/a Sites & Structures Group, Inc., d/b/a Sites & Structures Group, LLC, and d/b/a Mapworx, LLC, DBR No. 22DP001.*

25, 2022, the Inspector contacted Michael Coates and confirmed that Dreamscapes performed work at the project site during the period July 29, 2021-June 16, 2022.

18. An October 26, 2022, search of the Department's contractor's registration database revealed that Coates Dreamscapes holds contractor registration GC-45541, with a current expiration date of March 31, 2023.

Complaint B

19. On October 6, 2022, the Office received Complaint C-11091 from a homeowner ("Consumer B") asserting that on or about January 21, 2022, Consumer B and Respondent entered into a contract for a residential construction project at the consumer's home in Providence, Rhode Island ("Project B") for a total price of \$14,800.

20. As reflected in the document titled "Requirements & Deliverables" prepared by Respondent for Consumer B, a copy of which was included in his complaint, the scope of work for Project B included survey, design and permitting work for a cost of \$4,200 and the post permitting work described in the Building Permit #BLDG-22-217 dated May 19, 2022, that Respondent obtained from the City of Providence (the "Building Permit").

21. The Building Permit, a copy of which Consumer B included in his complaint, states that: "THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT RI CONTRACTOR NAME: Christopher Santosuosso LICENSE TYPE: Residential/Commercial COMPANY: Sites & Structures Group, inc BCRB: GC-46070 ... IS PERMITTED TO PERFORM THE FOLLOWING SCOPE OF WORK To remove existing stone walls built, which have been deemed not in compliance per the City of Providence Inspection Division and replace with new stone retaining wall system designed in accordance with new engineering plans."

22. On January 21, 2022, Consumer B had paid Respondent an initial deposit in the amount of \$1,200, in cash, as evidenced by a receipt from Respondent.

23. Consumer B states that Respondent commenced work at the residence on February 1, 2022, and work continued until October 1, 2022. During that time period, Consumer B paid Respondent the following additional amounts: on March 19, 2022, \$1,200 in cash, as evidenced by a receipt from Respondent; on May 31, 2022, \$1,200 in cash, as evidenced by a receipt from Respondent; on August 8, 2022, \$4,000 by check; and on August 15, 2022, \$1,000 by check; with a total of \$8,600 having been paid by Consumer B to Respondent.

24. In his complaint, Consumer B states that Respondent ceased work on October 1, 2022, and that “[t]he property was left in a total state of disrepair as the existing walls have been torn down and the rock has been distributed throughout the yard and used as fill. The “cages” purchased to provide the structure to hold the stone as the walls were rebuilt have been destroyed as well as buried in the yard. [Respondent had failed to] [c]omplete rebuilding of the retaining wall system to provide the adequate retention of material and proper drainage of the property as designed.”

25. Along with a copy of the Building Permit, Consumer B provided with his complaint a copy of Engineering Plans dated May 15, 2022, which lists Respondent in the Title Block and contains the engineer stamp and signature of Anthony E. Esposito who, upon information and belief, holds a professional engineer registration in the State of Rhode Island.

26. An investigation conducted by the SBO Inspector during the period October 24, 2022, through November 15, 2022, including an on-site inspection of Property B on October 24, 2022, confirmed that Consumer B had documentation evidencing Consumer B’s payments to Respondent of \$8,600 of the \$14,800 price for Project B. As reflected in an investigation report

dated November 15, 2022 (“Investigation Report B”), the SBO Inspector also confirmed the state of disrepair, destruction and burying of cages and incomplete work at the residence as described by Consumer B. The SBO Inspector also observed that “[d]ue to the destruction and removal of the walls and the project not being finished, water and wind erosion is evident, impacting drainage from the yard, results are seen in the staining of the street from the washed-out materials.”

27. Also during the investigation, the Inspector contacted Michael Coates and confirmed that that Respondent had retained Coates Dreamscapes to perform certain aspects of the work for Project B at the project site during the period February 1 to October 1, 2022.

28. As indicated above, an October 13, 2022, search of the Department’s contractor’s registration database revealed that Respondent Santosuosso’s Registration GC-46070, with the company name Sites & Structures Group, Inc., expired on August 4, 2022, and it was not renewed and was no longer valid after that date.

NOTICE OF VIOLATIONS

Based upon the foregoing, it is the Department’s position that:

- a. In its contracts with Consumer A and Consumer B, Respondent violated § 5-65-3(o).
- b. Respondent has engaged in conduct as a contractor that is dishonest or fraudulent and injurious to the welfare of the public in violation of § 5-65-10(a)(3).
- c. Respondent engaged in repeated acts in violation of Chapter 5-65 and the Regulations including substandard workmanship and misuse of registration in violation of § 5-65-10(a)(9).
- d. Respondent breached contracts with Consumer A and Consumer B in violation of § 5-65-10(a)(11).
- e. Respondent performed negligent and/or improper work for both Consumer A and Consumer B in violation of § 5-65-10(a)(12).
- f. Respondent failed to complete the Project A and Project B construction projects and willfully failed to comply with the terms of the contracts for such work in violation of § 5-65-10(a)(14).

CONCLUSION AND BASIS FOR EMERGENCY ACTION

At this time, the Director has just cause to believe that in its transactions with both Consumer A and Consumer B, Respondent committed multiple violations of Chapter 5-65 and the Regulations, including violations of R.I. Gen. Laws §§ 5-65-3 and 5-65-10(a) (3), (9), (11), (12), and (14), and that Respondent is “acting to the detriment of the health, welfare, and safety of the general public.” For these reasons, the Director finds that there is a serious threat to Rhode Island consumers which requires that Respondent’s Registration and/or any renewal thereof be immediately suspended pursuant to R.I. Gen. Laws § 5-65-10(f).

ORDER

Accordingly, it is hereby **ORDERED**:

1. That, pursuant to R.I. Gen. Laws § 5-65-10(f), Respondent’s Contractor Registration # GC-46070 including any renewal thereof, is immediately suspended.
2. In accordance with §§ 5-65-3 and 5-65-10, during the period of such suspension, Respondent cannot undertake, offer to undertake, submit a bid, perform or arrange to perform work as a contractor.
3. That Respondent shall immediately notify all parties for whom Respondent has outstanding contracts or other contractor related obligations that Respondent’s Registration has been suspended pursuant to this Order.
4. That Respondent shall appear before a Hearing Officer of the Department for an administrative hearing on December 14, 2022 at 2:00 p.m. (which is within thirty (30) days of this Order) to show cause why Respondent’s Registration should not be revoked, fines imposed, Respondent ordered to cease and desist from further

violations of Chapter 5-65 and the Regulations, and/or other appropriate administrative action taken.

The **Hearing shall be held on December 14, 2022, at 2:00 p.m.** and conducted remotely via Zoom at the following link (detailed instructions are included in the attached sheet):

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86530322801>

Pursuant to R.I. Gen. Laws §§ 5-65-20 and 42-6-8, the undersigned hereby appoints Catherine Warren, Esq., as Hearing Officer for the purpose of conducting the hearing and rendering a decision in this matter. The proceedings shall be conducted in accordance with the APA and the Rules of Procedure. It shall be Respondent's sole responsibility, or that of Respondent's representative, to present Respondent's defense to the Hearing Officer. Pursuant to 440-RICR-10-00-1, Respondent may be represented by legal counsel admitted in the State of Rhode Island. If Respondent fails to appear at the Hearing and has not otherwise notified the Hearing Officer of Respondent's inability to attend, the Hearing Officer may enter a default judgment against Respondent pursuant to 440-RICR-10-00-1.17.

Questions regarding this Order may be presented to Attorney Ania Zielinski via email at ania.zielinski@dbr.ri.gov or by phone at 401-580-2353 and should reference the case name and number. Please refrain from contacting the Hearing Officer on any matters related to the subject of the above unless all parties are notified of and participate in the communication.

Entered: November 21, 2022



Elizabeth K. Dwyer, Interim Director

All are welcome at the Rhode Island Department of Business Regulation ("DBR"). If any reasonable accommodation is needed to ensure equal access, service or participation, please contact DBR at (401) 462-9551, RI Relay at 7-1-1, or email DBR.dirofficeinq@dbr.ri.gov at

least three (3) business days prior to the hearing. To request sign language and/or CART services for the deaf and hard of hearing, please contact the Department via email at shirley.dossantos@dbr.ri.gov or via telephone at (401) 462-9551. We strongly encourage you to do this at least five (5) business days before the date of the scheduled hearing to allow adequate time to process your request.

CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify on this 21 day of November 2022, that a true copy of the within Emergency Order, Order to Show Cause, Notice of Hearing and Appointment of Hearing Officer, was sent by first class mail and certified mail, return receipt requested, and email to:

Christopher Santosuosso Sites & Structures Group, Inc. 1637 Elmwood Ave, Suite 200 Cranston, RI 02910	Christopher Santosuosso 30 Fernbrook Ct, Apt. 4 Cranston, RI 02920	Christopher Santosuosso 1107 S. Main Street Fall River, MA 02724
--	--	--

And by e-mail to:

1. Catherine Warren, Esq., Hearing Officer (Catherine.warren@doa.ri.gov);
2. Ania Zielinski, DBR Legal Counsel (ania.zielinski@dbr.ri.gov);
3. Donna Costantino, DBR Associate Director (donna.costantino@dbr.ri.gov);
4. Matthew Lambert, Principal Investigator, Contractors' Registration and Licensing Board, DBR (matthew.lambert@dbr.ri.gov);
5. Christopher Santosuosso (chris@sitesnstructures.com).



 Print Name: Matthew Lambert

Hearing - DBR Zoom Instruction Sheet

The Hearing will NOT be in person at DBR but will be held remotely on Zoom.

To participate you must join the Zoom Meeting by clicking on the link below or by calling one of the numbers and entering the Meeting ID when prompted.

It is preferred that you join on video.

If you have not already done so, please [download Zoom Client](#) to your computer, tablet and/or smartphone ahead of the pre-hearing conference.

If you already have the Zoom application on your device, please install any updates prior to joining the meeting.

Join Zoom Meeting for the Hearing, Wednesday, December 14, 2022, at 2pm.

Click here: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86530322801>

Meeting ID: **865 3032 2801**

One tap mobile

+13052241968,,86530322801# US

+13092053325,,86530322801# US

Dial by your location

+1 305 224 1968 US

+1 309 205 3325 US

+1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago)

+1 646 558 8656 US (New York)

+1 646 931 3860 US

+1 301 715 8592 US (Washington DC)

+1 253 215 8782 US (Tacoma)

+1 346 248 7799 US (Houston)

+1 360 209 5623 US

+1 386 347 5053 US

+1 507 473 4847 US

+1 564 217 2000 US

+1 669 444 9171 US

+1 669 900 9128 US (San Jose)

+1 689 278 1000 US

+1 719 359 4580 US

+1 253 205 0468 US

888 788 0099 US Toll-free

833 548 0276 US Toll-free
833 548 0282 US Toll-free
877 853 5247 US Toll-free