



## Increased Scrutiny After Fatal Berkeley Balcony Collapse

By Chuck Coppola

June 29, 2015

The agency responsible for contractor licenses says it intends to fix a gap in reporting that may have alerted regulators before Berkeley's fatal balcony collapse two weeks ago.

Six people died and seven more suffered serious injuries when the balcony's wooden joists broke.

The Contractor's State License Board, which oversees 300,000 contractors statewide, says the contractor that built the Berkeley balcony that collapsed did not have to report that it paid \$3.5 million to settle a dry rot lawsuit in Millbrae two years ago to settle similar complaints in San Jose.

"We're talking about some serious things. We're very concerned that this information was not brought forward to us. We don't believe that's in consumers' best interests," said Rick Lopes, a spokesperson for the bank.

Lopes says architects and engineers must report settlements to their respective license boards, but contractors are exempt.

**"Right now, builders insist on confidentiality so they can sell to an unsuspecting public without any scrutiny for their prior acts," attorney Tom Miller said.**

The contractor responsible for construction of the Berkeley apartments where the balcony collapsed did not respond to requests for comment, but the Wall and Ceiling Alliance, a contractor trade group said disclosure of settlements could help builders weed out contractors not working up to code.