

[North Carolina landscaping companies](#) dodged a bullet this year when the general assembly put off the requirement for a surety bond to go with the upcoming landscaper contractors license requirements.

But that bullet is going back into the gun for next year and now is the time to take a few simple steps to make sure that you don't get run out of business in early 2011 because of a regulatory hurdle.

North Carolina Landscaping companies have plenty to worry about in terms of their [landscaping insurance needs](#)

They need landscape liability insurance, landscape workers compensation insurance as well as coverage on their trucks and their equipment.

But the thing that could bring down the house and close their doors is really the cheapest and least expensive.

A landscapers surety bond.

And it looks like every NC landscaper will have to have one by January 2011 if current expectations play out.

This bond will not be expensive, in fact it should cost no more than \$100 per year.

But if you are not eligible to get the bond, then you might find yourself unable to operate as a business.

I watched this process play out in NC in 2009 with the newly [required irrigation contractors license bond](#). This bond is required for any firm wishing to use the word irrigation in their name or wishing to perform irrigation installation, repairs or maintenance.

In the beginning this bond was relatively easy to obtain, but over time became more and more difficult.

In fact, some firms are being put out of business right now because of their inability to obtain this bond.

So what lessons can we learn from that process to protect and prepare landscapers for the next

bond requirement.

There are several lessons here. The first lesson is to act fast. As soon as you know that the bond is required, get on board and apply for your bond.

With the irrigation license bond, we were able to issue about 30 of them in the first month before the bonding companies decided that they needed to order a credit report on the irrigation companies.

If you are a landscaping company with marginal credit,

you should act quickly when the bond requirement is announced and perhaps you can get your bond issued before the bonding companies realize how many they will be issuing and start asking for credit reports.

Secondly, understand that poor credit will give you trouble with your bond, so work now to clear up any credit problems that you have. Pay off those debts and if you can avoid it, don't file bankruptcy. Bankruptcy made getting [the irrigation bond](#) impossible for some and now has shut down their company.

Don't let that happen to you.

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