

Kimball, Tiley & St. John LLP

Mechanic's Lien Releases

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Did you know that there are four different types of mechanic lien releases in California? Property owners and managers should be familiar with the different types, so they can require the appropriate release to match the situation.

Conditional v. Unconditional Lien Releases

- Unconditional lien releases are effective immediately, once signed and delivered. Contractors, subcontractors and material suppliers provide them only when they've been paid and the payment checks have cleared the bank.
- Conditional lien releases are effective only once payment is received (and the check has cleared).

Progress v. Final Lien Releases

- Progress lien releases are provided when a contractor, subcontractor or material supplier has provided some (but not all) of its work or materials.
- Final lien releases are provided when a contractor, subcontractor or material supplier has finished providing all of its services or materials for the project.

There are four different possible types of lien releases:

- (1) Conditional progress lien releases;
- (2) Unconditional progress lien releases;
- (3) Conditional final lien releases; and
- (4) Unconditional final lien releases.

The legislature has established the form for each of these four statutorily prescribed lien releases. The form of these lien releases changed on July 1, 2012. Users should use the current versions. ***The four different lien release forms are attached to this article.***

The property owner's goal should be to ultimately receive a final lien release from each contractor, subcontractor and material supplier, and to receive progress lien releases to match the progress payments that are made.

Helpful Suggestions for Property Owners:

- Don't make payments that exceed the value of the work completed.
- Before or at the time you make a payment, require lien releases for the work completed from each of the contractors, subcontractors and material suppliers.

Failing to obtain the proper lien release can have serious consequences. Unless a property owner receives proper releases, the property owner may have to pay twice for the same materials or services. Property owners who are not completely familiar with mechanic's lien laws should consult with a knowledgeable attorney.

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CONDITIONAL WAIVER AND RELEASE ON PROGRESS PAYMENT

NOTICE: THIS DOCUMENT WAIVES THE CLAIMANT'S LIEN, STOP PAYMENT NOTICE, AND PAYMENT BOND RIGHTS EFFECTIVE ON RECEIPT OF PAYMENT. A PERSON SHOULD NOT RELY ON THIS DOCUMENT UNLESS SATISFIED THAT THE CLAIMANT HAS RECEIVED PAYMENT.

Identifying Information

Name of Claimant: _____

Name of Customer: _____

Job Location: _____

Owner: _____

Through Date: _____

Conditional Waiver and Release

This document waives and releases lien, stop payment notice, and payment bond rights the claimant has for labor and service provided, and equipment and material delivered, to the customer on this job through the Through Date of this document. Rights based upon labor or service provided, or equipment or material delivered, pursuant to a written change order that has been fully executed by the parties prior to the date that this document is signed by the claimant, are waived and released by this document, unless listed as an Exception below. This document is effective only on the claimant's receipt of payment from the financial institution on which the following check is drawn:

Maker of Check: _____

Amount of Check: \$ _____

Check Payable to: _____

Exceptions

This document does not affect any of the following:

(1) Retentions.

(2) Extras for which the claimant has not received payment.

(3) The following progress payments for which the claimant has previously given a conditional waiver and release but has not received payment:

Date(s) of waiver and release: _____

Amount(s) of unpaid progress payment(s): \$ _____

(4) Contract rights, including (A) a right based on rescission, abandonment, or breach of contract, and (B) the right to recover compensation for work not compensated by the payment.

Claimant's Signature: _____

Claimant's Title: _____

Date of Signature: _____

UNCONDITIONAL WAIVER AND RELEASE ON PROGRESS

PAYMENT NOTICE TO CLAIMANT: THIS DOCUMENT WAIVES AND RELEASES LIEN, STOP PAYMENT NOTICE, AND PAYMENT BOND RIGHTS UNCONDITIONALLY AND STATES THAT YOU HAVE BEEN PAID FOR GIVING UP THOSE RIGHTS. THIS DOCUMENT IS ENFORCEABLE AGAINST YOU IF YOU SIGN IT, EVEN IF YOU HAVE NOT BEEN PAID. IF YOU HAVE NOT BEEN PAID, USE A CONDITIONAL WAIVER AND RELEASE FORM.

Identifying Information

Name of Claimant: _____
Name of Customer: _____
Job Location: _____
Owner: _____
Through Date: _____

Unconditional Waiver and Release

This document waives and releases lien, stop payment notice, and payment bond rights the claimant has for labor and service provided, and equipment and material delivered, to the customer on this job through the Through Date of this document. Rights based upon labor or service provided, or equipment or material delivered, pursuant to a written change order that has been fully executed by the parties prior to the date that this document is signed by the claimant, are waived and released by this document, unless listed as an Exception below. The claimant has received the following progress payment: \$_____.

Exceptions

This document does not affect any of the following:

- (1) Retentions.
- (2) Extras for which the claimant has not received payment.
- (3) Contract rights, including (A) a right based on rescission, abandonment, or breach of contract, and (B) the right to recover compensation for work not compensated by the payment.

Claimant's Signature: _____
Claimant's Title: _____
Date of Signature: _____

CONDITIONAL WAIVER AND RELEASE ON FINAL PAYMENT

NOTICE: THIS DOCUMENT WAIVES THE CLAIMANT'S LIEN, STOP PAYMENT NOTICE, AND PAYMENT BOND RIGHTS EFFECTIVE ON RECEIPT OF PAYMENT. A PERSON SHOULD NOT RELY ON THIS DOCUMENT UNLESS SATISFIED THAT THE CLAIMANT HAS RECEIVED PAYMENT.

Identifying Information

Name of Claimant: _____

Name of Customer: _____

Job Location: _____

Owner: _____

Conditional Waiver and Release

This document waives and releases lien, stop payment notice, and payment bond rights the claimant has for labor and service provided, and equipment and material delivered, to the customer on this job. Rights based upon labor or service provided, or equipment or material delivered, pursuant to a written change order that has been fully executed by the parties prior to the date that this document is signed by the claimant, are waived and released by this document, unless listed as an Exception below. This document is effective only on the claimant's receipt of payment from the financial institution on which the following check is drawn:

Maker of Check: _____

Amount of Check: \$ _____

Check Payable to: _____

Exceptions

This document does not affect any of the following:

Disputed claims for extras in the amount of: \$ _____

Claimant's Signature: _____

Claimant's Title: _____

Date of Signature: _____

UNCONDITIONAL WAIVER AND RELEASE ON FINAL PAYMENT

NOTICE TO CLAIMANT: THIS DOCUMENT WAIVES AND RELEASES LIEN, STOP PAYMENT NOTICE, AND PAYMENT BOND RIGHTS UNCONDITIONALLY AND STATES THAT YOU HAVE BEEN PAID FOR GIVING UP THOSE RIGHTS. THIS DOCUMENT IS ENFORCEABLE AGAINST YOU IF YOU SIGN IT, EVEN IF YOU HAVE NOT BEEN PAID. IF YOU HAVE NOT BEEN PAID, USE A CONDITIONAL WAIVER AND RELEASE FORM.

Identifying Information

Name of Claimant: _____

Name of Customer: _____

Job Location: _____

Owner: _____

Unconditional Waiver and Release

This document waives and releases lien, stop payment notice, and payment bond rights the claimant has for all labor and service provided, and equipment and material delivered, to the customer on this job. Rights based upon labor or service provided, or equipment or material delivered, pursuant to a written change order that has been fully executed by the parties prior to the date that this document is signed by the claimant, are waived and released by this document, unless listed as an Exception below. The claimant has been paid in full.

Exceptions

This document does not affect the following:

Disputed claims for extras in the amount of: \$_____

Claimant's Signature: _____

Claimant's Title: _____

Date of Signature: _____