

**RCW 18.106.070 Certificates of competency, installer endorsement
—Issuance—Renewal—Rights of holder—Training certificates—
Supervision—Training, certified plumber—Work group.**

(1) The department shall issue a certificate of competency to all applicants who have passed the examination and have paid the fee for the certificate. The certificate may include a photograph of the holder. The certificate shall bear the date of issuance, and be renewed every three years, upon application, on or before the birthdate of the holder. The department shall renew a certificate of competency if the applicant: (a) Pays the renewal fee assessed by the department; and (b) during the past three years has completed twenty-four hours of continuing education approved by the department with the advice of the advisory board, including four hours related to electrical safety. For holders of the specialty plumber certificate under RCW 18.106.010(14)(c), the continuing education may comprise both electrical and plumbing education with a minimum of twelve of the required twenty-four hours of continuing education in plumbing. If a person fails to renew the certificate by the renewal date, he or she must pay a doubled fee. If the person does not renew the certificate within ninety days of the renewal date, he or she must retake the examination and pay the examination fee.

The journey level plumber, specialty plumber, and residential service plumber certificates of competency, the medical gas piping installer endorsement, and the temporary permit provided for in this chapter grant the holder the right to engage in the work of plumbing as a journey level plumber, specialty plumber, residential service plumber, or medical gas piping installer, in accordance with their provisions throughout the state and within any of its political subdivisions on any job or any employment without additional proof of competency or any other license or permit or fee to engage in the work. This section does not preclude employees from adhering to a union security clause in any employment where such a requirement exists.

(2) A person who is indentured to an apprenticeship program approved under chapter 49.04 RCW for the plumbing construction trade or who is learning the plumbing construction trade may work in the plumbing construction trade if supervised by a certified journey level plumber or a certified specialty plumber in that plumber's specialty. All apprentices and individuals learning the plumbing construction trade shall obtain a plumbing training certificate from the department. The certificate shall authorize the holder to learn the plumbing construction trade while under the direct supervision of a journey level plumber or a specialty plumber working in his or her specialty. The certificate may include a photograph of the holder. The holder of the plumbing training certificate shall renew the certificate annually. At the time of renewal, the holder shall provide the department with an accurate list of the holder's employers in the plumbing construction industry for the previous year and the number of hours worked for each employer. Failure to provide plumbing hours worked for each employer is a violation of this chapter, subject to an infraction under RCW 18.106.320, and must result in nonrenewal of the trainee certificate. A fee shall be charged for the issuance or renewal of the certificate. The department shall set the fee by rule. The fee shall cover but not exceed the cost of administering and enforcing the trainee certification and supervision requirements of this chapter.

(3) (a) Trainee supervision shall consist of a trainee being on the same jobsite and under the control of either a journey level plumber, residential service plumber, or an appropriate specialty plumber who has an applicable certificate of competency issued under this chapter. Either a journey level plumber, residential service plumber, or an appropriate specialty plumber shall be:

(i) On the same jobsite as the trainee for a minimum of seventy-five percent of each working day unless otherwise provided in this chapter.

(ii) Available via mobile phone or similar device in a manner that allows both audio and visual direction to the trainee from the supervising plumber. Remote trainee supervision using these types of technology is only permitted in cases that meet the following criteria:

(A) The trainee has more than two thousand hours of training;

(B) The supervising plumber is no more than forty miles from the jobsite; and

(C) The scope of work on the trainee's jobsite is service plumbing in a residential structure.

(b) An individual who has a current training certificate and who has successfully completed or is currently enrolled in an approved apprenticeship program or in a technical school program in the plumbing construction trade in a school approved by the workforce training and education coordinating board, may work without direct on-site supervision during the last six months of meeting the practical experience requirements of this chapter.

(4) (a) Until December 31, 2025, the ratio of trainees to certified journey level, residential service, or specialty plumbers working on a jobsite must be:

(i) Not more than three trainees working on any one residential structure jobsite for every certified specialty plumber or journey level plumber working as a specialty plumber;

(ii) Not more than one trainee working on any one jobsite for every certified journey level plumber working as a journey level plumber; and

(iii) Not more than one trainee working on any one jobsite for every certified residential service plumber.

(b) After December 31, 2025, not more than two trainees may work on any residential structure jobsite for every certified specialty plumber or journey level plumber working as a specialty plumber.

(5) An individual who has a current training certificate and who has successfully completed or is currently enrolled in a medical gas piping installer training course approved by the department may work on medical gas piping systems if the individual is under the direct supervision of a certified medical gas piping installer who holds a medical gas piping installer endorsement one hundred percent of a working day on a one-to-one ratio.

(6) The training to become a certified plumber must include not less than sixteen hours of classroom training established by the director with the advice of the advisory board. The classroom training must include, but not be limited to, electrical wiring safety, grounding, bonding, and other related items plumbers need to know to work under this chapter.

(7) All persons who are certified plumbers before January 1, 2003, are deemed to have received the classroom training required in subsection (6) of this section.

(8)(a) The department shall instruct the advisory board of plumbers to convene a subgroup that includes the statewide association representing plumbing, heating, and cooling contractors; the union representing plumbers and pipefitters; the association representing plumbing contractors who employ union plumbers and pipefitters; and other directly affected stakeholders after the completion of the 2023 legislative session, the 2024 legislative session, and every three years thereafter.

(b) The work group shall evaluate the effects that the trainee ratio changes have had on the industry, including public safety and industry response to public demand for plumbing services. The work group shall determine a sustainable plan for maintaining sufficient numbers of plumbers and trainees within the plumbing workforce to safely meet the needs of the public. The report is due to the standing labor committees of the legislature before December 1st of each year that the work group convenes. The work group shall conclude on receipt of the report by the legislature. Within current funding appropriated to the department, the department must reimburse each member of the work group in accordance with the provisions of RCW 43.03.050 and 43.03.060 for each day in which the member is actually engaged in attendance of meetings of the advisory board. [2020 c 153 § 10; 2013 c 23 § 19; 2009 c 36 § 3; 2006 c 185 § 10; 2003 c 399 § 801; 1997 c 326 § 6; 1985 c 465 § 1; 1983 c 124 § 3; 1977 ex.s. c 149 § 7; 1973 1st ex.s. c 175 § 7.]

Finding—Intent—2009 c 36: See note following RCW 18.106.020.

Part headings not law—2003 c 399: See note following RCW 19.28.006.

Effective date—1997 c 326: See note following RCW 18.106.010.