

SENATE BILL REPORT

HB 1590

As of March 27, 2015

Title: An act relating to requiring completion of an apprenticeship program to receive a journey level or residential specialty electrician certificate of competency.

Brief Description: Requiring completion of an apprenticeship program to receive a journey level or residential specialty electrician certificate of competency.

Sponsors: Representatives Reykdal, Haler, Dunshee, Ryu, Van De Wege, Ormsby, Fitzgibbon, Riccelli, Blake, Tarleton, McBride, Wylie and Goodman.

Brief History: Passed House: 3/05/15, 52-46.

Committee Activity: Commerce & Labor: 3/25/15.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE & LABOR

Staff: Richard Rodger (786-7461)

Background: An electrical contractor licensee is required to engage in the business of installing or maintaining wires or equipment to convey electric current, or equipment to be operated by electric current. To work as an electrician, an individual must have a journey level (01) or specialty electrician certificate of competency. The specialties include residential (02), and multiple other specialties.

To be certified as a journey level electrician, an individual must work in the electrical construction trade for at least 8000 hours to take the required examination. For the residential specialty (02) certificate, the applicant must work in the specialty for at least 4000 hours to take the examination.

An applicant for a journey level or any of the electrical specialty certificates may alternatively complete an apprenticeship program approved by the Washington State Apprenticeship and Training Council.

An applicant who has completed a two-year program at a community or technical college or technical or trade school may substitute up to two years of the school program for two years of work experience. Training in the electrical construction trade in the military may also be credited as work experience.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

To obtain the necessary work experience to become a journey level or specialty electrician, persons must obtain an electrical training certificate, and in general, trainees must work under the supervision of a journey level or the appropriate specialty electrician.

The Department of Labor and Industries (L&I) issues licenses and certificates of competency and otherwise administers the regulation of electricians and electrical work.

Summary of Bill: Beginning July 1, 2020, applicants for a journey level (01) or residential specialty (02) electrician certificate of competency must complete an apprenticeship program to take the examination. The applicant must have worked under supervision for a minimum of 8000 hours for the journey level certificate or 4000 hours for the residential specialty certificate.

Applicants may substitute a school program or military experience for the work experience required under an apprenticeship program. Trainees must be either in an apprenticeship program, learning a specialty other than residential, or learning the trade in a school program. Journey level and residential specialty trainees must have in their possession proof of apprenticeship or training program registration and must show these documents to a representative of L&I upon request.

Until July 1, 2022, L&I may permit an applicant who obtained experience and training equivalent to an apprenticeship program to take the journey level or residential specialty examination, as appropriate, if the applicant demonstrates good cause for not completing the required minimum hours of work before the new apprenticeship requirements take effect.

Obsolete language in several statutes is deleted and obsolete terminology is updated.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect on July 1, 2020.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: Oregon and Idaho require apprenticeship training programs for their electricians. Those states currently do not allow reciprocal licensing because apprenticeships are not required in Washington. The bill makes it easier for electricians to work in border areas. Apprenticeships are the safest and most effective way to be trained in this dangerous profession. Apprenticeship programs protect both workers and the public.

CON: This bill is anti family-owned businesses, who will no longer be allowed to train their own workers. In-shop training is an effective method of training electricians. Those trainees still have to take and pass the electrical examinations. The average electrical business has only four employees. The bill does nothing to help veterans, and only enacts additional barriers.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Representative Reykdal, prime sponsor; Bob Guenther, International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) 77; Randy Ambuehl, NW WA Electrical Joint Apprenticeship and Training; Mike Bridges, IBEW 48; Brandon Smith, National Electrical Contractors Assn., IBEW Electrical Training Center; Matthew Hepner, IBEW 191; Halene Sigmund, Construction Industry Training Council.

CON: Jim King, WA State HVACR Assn.; Gary Smith, Independent Business Assn.; Michael Curley, Curley Electric; Rod Burdett, WA State Electrical Contractors Assn.

Persons Signed in to Testify But Not Testifying: No one.