

Overview of HVAC/R Industry Legislative/Policy Activities

1985 to 2007

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Regulatory History

- **1985** - Electrical Board policy was enacted to allow the HVAC industry to install a single thermostat in a single-family dwelling.
- **1998** - Electrical Board, in conjunction with the Attorney General's Office made a determination that the existing policy was illegal. The HVAC and electrical industry worked together to develop the new specialty.
- **1999** – Creation of new specialty with a scope of work limited to line voltage components within the HVAC equipment and low voltage for all residential occupancies and other buildings that did not exceed three floors above grade.

Regulatory History

- **2000** - The scope of work was expanded to allow the HVAC industry to install and connect line voltage supply whips not over 6 feet in length.
- **2001** - 06A – HVAC/refrigeration scope of work was changed to include line voltage work and allowed the HVAC/R specialty to disconnect and reconnect the line voltage power supply to their equipment.

Regulatory History

2003 - Senate bill 6630 passed, allowing certain electrical specialties to have the work experience requirement reduced.

- The HVAC industry requested further scope expansions to include all HVAC work in all building types and additional line voltage expansion. After many meetings, the HVAC and electrical industry could not come to consensus on the requested proposed expansions.

Regulatory History

- Special Electrical Board meeting on the scope of work resulting in the following significant changes:
 - Creation of the 06B specialty
 - Scope also expanded to allow certified electricians and supervised trainees to work on high voltage (i.e. above 600 volts) systems.
 - Scope expanded to include line voltage work in many types of equipment outside the HVAC system

Legislative Activity - 2004 to 2007

- SB 6607 (2004) Developing a plan to transfer regulation of HVAC specialty contractors from the electrical board
- HB 2900/SB 6267 (2004) Certifying certain persons as HVAC/refrigeration specialty electrical administrators or electricians without an examination
- SB 3177/SB 6772 (2006) Integrating HVAC/R mechanics and contractors into the provisions governing plumbers
- HB 1917/SB 5875 (2007) - Changing the regulation of plumbing to also include HVAC/R
- HB 1876/SB 5831(2007)- Providing for the certification of mechanics performing heating, ventilating, air conditioning, refrigeration, and gas piping work

HVAC/R Licensing & Testing Requirements Study - Fall 2005

The 2004 Supplemental Operating Budget directed the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee (JLARC) to review the licensing, certification, and testing requirements of HVAC/R (Refrigeration) contractors and installers.

Key JLARC Recommendations and Agency Response

- **Recommendation #1**

L&I should provide consumers with assurance that technicians have electrical knowledge and experience before certification.

- **Agency Response**

When the HVAC/R specialty was created in 1998, L&I decided to allow an HVAC/R trainee credit for all work experience in the HVAC/R trade.

Key JLARC Recommendations and Agency Response

•Recommendation #2

L&I should more clearly explain its methodology for determining training requirements, and clarify agency rules to inform HVAC/R technicians of their industry's options to reduce required training hours.

•Agency Response

L&I has provided scope of work training to HVAC/R industry trade organizations, HVAC/R training programs and HVAC/R contractors.

Key JLARC Recommendations and Agency Response

- **Recommendation #3**

To provide policymakers and industry with a better sense of possible options, L&I should provide fiscal and public safety estimates of scenarios that would certify other aspects of HVAC/R work.

- **Agency Response**

Labor & Industries conducted an stakeholder-driven process to develop and review comprehensive solutions. This resulted in the HVAC/R Task Force and the resulting report to JLARC.

Key JLARC Recommendations and Agency Response

- **Recommendation #4**

If the Legislature wishes to more broadly represent regulated entities with knowledge of trade-specific equipment, it should revisit the Board's current composition.

- **Agency Response**

The addition of an HVAC/R member to the Electrical Board would require a statutory change to be passed by the Legislature. However, the Electrical Board did add a new member who is an HVAC/R contractor.

HVAC/R Task Force

- Response to JLARC Recommendation #3
 - February to August 2006
 - 37 Member Task Force with representatives from business, labor and the agency
 - Met several times from February to September
- Organized into three subcommittees
 - Regulatory Alternatives
 - Public Safety
 - Consumer and Business Protection
- Reported to JLARC in September 2006

Task Force Subcommittee Objectives

- Public Safety
 - To consider the public safety issues surrounding the HVAC/R industry
- Business and Consumer Protection
 - To consider the impacts of regulatory options on consumers and businesses
- Regulatory Alternatives
 - To review all possible regulatory alternatives and recommend those final few that the task force would report to JLARC as regulatory options.

Task Force Criteria for Evaluation of Proposals

- Protection of public safety
- Consumer protection
- No unnecessary regulatory obstacles
- A level playing field
- No stranded capital for workers or businesses

Regulatory Alternatives Identified

- No Change
- Telecom Model
- Increased Verification of Electrical Hours
- Mechanical Board
- HVAC/R Board

2007 Legislation

- Two options submitted to Legislature, neither passed
 - HB 1776 – HVAC/R Administrator License
 - Required an HVAC/R Administrator, similar to the Electrical Administrator at every firm doing HVAC/R Work
 - HB 1876 – HVAC/R Mechanic Licensing
 - Required licensing of all HVAC/R Mechanics and Gas Piping Mechanics

Questions and Contact Information

If you have further questions contact:

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