Washington State Department of Labor & Industries

ELECTRICAL CURRENTS

Newsletter from the Office of the Chief Electrical Inspector

Ron Fuller, Chief Electrical Inspector | **Vol. 15 No. 3** | **March 2012**

- **This Month's Question of the Month** – Electrical equipment and wiring that has been submerged or exposed to water must comply with the following: All breakers, fuses, controllers, receptacles, lighting switches/dimmers, electric heaters, and any sealed device/equipment (e.g. relays, contactors, etc.) must be _____. A) cleaned, B) replaced, C) repaired, D) dried out – *See the correct answer on page 2.*

Safety Tip of the Month!

Stay at least 10 feet away from overhead wires during cleanup and other activities.

Assume that all overhead wires are energized at lethal voltages. Never assume that a wire is safe to touch even if it is down or appears to be insulated.

- **Note From The Chief**

The amnesty I offered from January 1st through February 15th to allow permit purchasers an opportunity to clean up their old permits that have never had a requested inspection and the permit has expired. If you have an expired permit without an inspection request, a regional supervisor/representative will contact you within the next two months to determine the department's course of action. Depending upon your situation, you may be required to obtain a new permit and request and arrange an electrical inspection. You may also receive a civil penalty for failing to make a timely inspection request or have the electrical power to the installation ordered disconnected.

Beginning this week, if you have not requested an inspection within 90 days after your permit purchase, you will be receiving a letter letting you know there is no inspection request. In accordance with WAC 296-46B-901(10), the permit purchaser must make an inspection request no later than three business days after an electrical installation is completed or one business day after any part of the installation has been energized. Failure to make the required inspection request may result in the permit purchaser receiving a civil penalty or disconnection of electrical power.

- **Leveling the Playing Field, Accomplishments in 2011**

During 2011, the department's electrical inspectors, auditors, and E-Core team issued 3,382 citations for violations identified by our stakeholders as representing the underground economy (i.e. no electrical contractor license, no electrician certificate, and no permit). This represents an increase of approximately 15% over those issued in 2010. Focusing our compliance efforts on unlicensed electrical contractors, uncertified electricians, and anyone who does not obtain an electrical permit and inspection will address our customers' expectations regarding compliance enforcement in the underground economy, helping maintain a level competitive playing field for legitimate electrical contractors, and keeping Washington's electrical installations safe.

Because of their proven success, we were able to add two positions to our E-Core team last year. If you would like to join us in the battle against the underground economy, you can make a big difference by watching for and reporting illegal electrical activity. There is a page on our web site, http://www.lni.wa.gov/TradesLicensing/Electrical/Violators/ECORE/default.asp that is dedicated to reporting violators. If you notice illegal activity, contact your local electrical inspection office or one of the following E-Core team members:

- Puget Sound, Jack Oxford oxfj235@lni.wa.gov 206-835-1130 (office) or 360-471-0796 (cell)
- NW Washington, Rand Jones jonv235@lni.wa.gov 206-515-2773 (office) or 360-561-0440 (cell)
- SW Washington, Bob Matson mabq@lni.wa.gov 360-902-4987 (office) or 360-471-0588 (cell)
- Eastern Washington, Phil Jordan jorp235@lni.wa.gov 509-324-2542 (office) or 360-471-0691 (cell)

You will increase the chances for a successful investigation if you e-mail an E-CORE team member a completed *Electrical Inspection Witness Statement* (form F500-087-000) or *Investigation Report* (form F500-076-000) available on our Web site at: **http://www.lni.wa.gov/TradesLicensing/Electrical/FormPub**

Ladders, Bucket Trucks, and Scaffolding

RCW 19.28.101(4) requires electrical wiring and equipment to be accessible for inspection. This includes access to ceiling spaces and elevated areas inside buildings. The permit holder must provide a means of accessing all electrical equipment that must be inspected. Providing access may require the permit holder to supply the inspector with a bucket or ladder truck, scaffolding, ladder, or other equipment. Avoid unnecessary additional inspection trips and trip fees by making prior arrangements with the electrical inspector to provide access to conduct these inspections.

Your best method to communicate access arrangements or other special needs to the inspector is to use the comments section when making the inspection request. The department's inspectors will make every possible effort to accommodate your request to be there when the access equipment is in place and safe.

We provide our inspectors with appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) and training to identify potential exposure to hazards, and when it is safe to utilize the contractor's safety system.

Don't be an Absentee Administrator

"Absentee Administrator" is a term used to describe a person who is assigned as the administrator or master electrician for an electrical contractor, but is not actually involved and responsible for the day-to-day electrical activities of the company. The department takes this issue very seriously and monetary penalties for this type of violation begin at $1,000.00 each for both the contractor and the administrator or master electrician.

RCW 19.28.061 states that the person designated as the master electrician or administrator for an electrical contractor must be a member of the firm or a full-time supervisory employee. He/she must be available during working hours to carry out the duties of an administrator. Further clarification of the terms "member of the firm" and "full time supervisory employee" is provided in WAC 296-46B-930.

The contractor must name all members of the firm on the electrical contractor's license. Partners must be on file with the department of licensing and corporate officers or members of an LLC or INC must be on file with the secretary of state.

When determining the full-time supervisory employment status of the assigned person, the department will consider whether the individual is on the contractor's full-time payroll; receives a regular salary or wage similar to other supervisory employees; has supervisory responsibility for work performed by the contractor; is available during normal business hours, and carries out the duties shown in RCW 19.28.

Ugly Installations

To enlarge the picture, Rclick on the picture, select Copy, and Paste into an MSWord document. Then, you can LClick on the picture, place your cursor over the picture's corner until a ⇕ symbol appears and then hold the LClick button and drag your mouse to expand the picture.

Violations: NEC 300.3(A) Single conductors to be in raceway; NEC 300.20 Induced currents in metal enclosures - group conductors; NEC 250.24(B) Main bonding jumper required; RCW 19.28.101 No permit, Covered prior to inspection

Service Panel

Answer to This Month's Question of the Month: B) replaced – WAC 296-46B-110(2)(a)

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