Washington State Department of Labor and Industries

ELECTRICAL CURRENTS

Newsletter from the Office of the Chief Electrical Inspector

Ron Fuller, Chief Electrical Inspector **Vol. 8 No. 12** **December 2005**

WAC Public Hearings

Public hearings will be held in two locations for the proposed electrical Washington Administrative Code (chapter 296-46B WAC) changes projected to be effective June 30, 2006. The revisions include department proposals and individual proposals recommended by the Technical Advisory Committee and the Electrical Board. The dates and times for the public hearings are:

11:00 AM, **January 11, 2006**	Ellensburg	Hal Holmes Community Center, 209 Ruby St.
9:00 AM, **January 12, 2006**	Tumwater	Labor & Industries, 7273 Linderson Way SW, Room S117

Electrical Board Recruitment For An Electrician Position

There is a new vacancy on the Electrical Advisory Board for an electrician member. Board members are typically appointed for four-year terms. The Governor is placing emphasis on achieving greater ethnic, gender and geographic balance on the Electrical Board. The Eastern Washington electrical industry currently is under-represented. Interested certified electricians may apply. Applications must be made, to the Governor's office, using the *Application for Gubernatorial Appointment to a Board or Commission* form. Requests for copies of the application and any questions may be directed to Angie Wharton at (360) 902-5259 or downloaded at

http://www.governor.wa.gov/boards/default.asp

Applicants should submit a letter of interest, completed application form (above), current resume, and letters of recommendation to the Governor's office (Office of the Governor, Attn: Shana Melanson, PO Box 40002, Olympia, WA 98504-0002).

Upcoming Stakeholder Meetings

Locations and times have been finalized for the upcoming stakeholder meetings. Regional and Central Office staff will take questions and update stakeholders on the Electrical Program activities from **7:00 PM-9:00 PM** at the following locations:

February

2nd, Tumwater	7273 Linderson Way, Auditorium
6th , Yakima	500 N. Keys Rd. Pacific Power
7th, Kennewick	2721 W 10th Av, Benton, PUD
8th, Spokane	W. 3410 Fort George Wright Drive
9th, Wenatchee	1151 Valley Mall Parkway, PUD
15th, Port Angeles	321 East 5th Street
16th, Bremerton	3027 Olympus Drive, Public Works
21st, Bellingham	311 Grand Ave. Court House
22nd, Everett	2320 California St, PUD
23rd, Tukwila	12806 Gateway Dr
28th, Vancouver	1200 Ft. Vancouver Way, PUD

March

1st, Tacoma	1102 Tacoma Avenue South, Library

Electrician, Master Electrician, and Administrator Exams Will Be Revised

February 1, 2006, is the target date for implementing electrical exams based on the 2005 NEC. From a candidate's standpoint, this should not affect a candidate's exam preparations. All exam questions are based on basic safety, Code, and theory fundamentals. These rarely change with a new NEC edition. Most changes in the exam are reference updates. Very few questions have been changed because of a code update.

After February 1st, the journeyman and specialty electrician exams will be divided into separate sections, similar to the master electrician and administrator exams. WAC and RCW questions will be in one section, Code and theory will be in another section. Total time allowed for the complete exams (both sections) will remain the same as it is now in the single-part exam. Both sections must be taken on your original examination. If you pass one section and fail the other, you will be allowed to reschedule the failed section. The total exam questions will remain similar to the current number asked.

Separating the state laws and rules material from the basic Code and theory material will allow an unsuccessful exam candidate to focus their studies on the specific areas where they are weak. This new

structure will also make it easier for the department to pursue further sharing of examinations with the other states involved in our reciprocal electrical licensing agreements.

● Inspection Fees For Outbuildings

We have been asked to clarify fee items in the residential section of the fee schedule.

Dwelling unit inspection fees are based on "square footage" including any attached garages regardless of service size or additional inside feeders. The special electrical equipment associated with some dwellings (e.g. swimming pools, spas, hot tubs, septic pumping systems) requires additional fees at one of two fee levels. The lower fee applies if the special equipment is inspected when the wiring in the associated dwelling unit is inspected; the higher rate applies if the special equipment is not inspected when the dwelling is inspected.

Residential outbuildings are inspected at one of two flat fees, regardless of the size of the circuit, feeder, or service that powers the building. The lower fee ($30.50) applies if the outbuilding is inspected when the associated dwelling unit is inspected, or the higher rate ($48.10) if the outbuilding is not inspected when the dwelling is inspected.

Note that "outbuildings" are structures that serve a direct accessory function to the residence, such as a pump house or storage building. "Outbuilding" does not include buildings used for commercial type occupancies or additional dwelling occupancies. All other miscellaneous structures on residential property have permit fees based on service or feeder size in WAC 296-46B-905(1)(b). If there is no dwelling unit on the property or a valid building permit for a dwelling unit, then any pump house, storage building, or other miscellaneous structure wired will be charged by feeder or service size from WAC 296-46B-905(1)(b).

The fees listed in WAC 296-46B-905 must always support the number of inspection trips requested by the permit holder. Any fee of less than $72.80 (two half-hour progress inspections) is expected to be completed in one requested inspection. If a contractor or homeowner buys a permit for $48.10 and schedules the work so two separate inspections are needed, the fee paid does not support the cost of the inspections. An additional trip fee ($36.40) will be added to the original fee to support the second inspection request.

Except for Class B labels, the department does not charge for return trips necessary to verify completion of safety corrections issued. The department also does not sell permits based only on trip fees. It is still department policy that we do not charge for requests to perform "final" inspections.

● Fire Alarm Systems, Security Systems, and Class B Labels

NEC Article 760 covers the installation of wiring and equipment for fire alarm systems, including all circuits controlled and powered by the fire alarm system. These systems include fire detection and alarm notification, voice communications, guard's tour, sprinkler water flow, and sprinkler supervisory systems. Fire alarm system installations are not eligible for Class B basic electrical work labels.

The criteria for whether a building is required to have a fire alarm system are found in NFPA 101 (Life Safety Code) and local building codes. Typically dwelling units do not require a "fire alarm system" when line voltage (battery back-up) smoke detectors are installed according to building codes. In such dwellings with low voltage security systems installed, heat and smoke detection devices and circuits may be included as an optional addition to the security system. These installations are eligible for Class B labels since they are not a fire alarm system.

Installers should note that some building officials are accepting a low voltage central fire alarm system in lieu of line voltage smoke detectors. This type of limited energy system would not be eligible for Class B labels since it is a true fire alarm system.

● Electrical Question of the Month

This Month's Question: Where electrical equipment is installed to obtain a series combination rating, the identification plate must be substantially what color? **A)** Green, **B)** Orange, **C)** Yellow, **D)** Red.

Last Month's Question: What is the maximum fine for violation of any of the provisions of the RCW that apply to electricians and electrical installations? **A)** $500, **B)** $1000, **C)** $5000, **D)** $10,000. The answer is: **D)** [RCW 19.28.131]

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