



ELECTRICAL CURRENTS

Newsletter from the Office of the Chief Electrical Inspector

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Vol. 10 No. 1

January 2007

● Fee Reduction

A one year 5% temporary fee reduction became effective December 31, 2006. If you are using form F500-093-000 or F500-094-000 to calculate your fees it is important to download the new updated form. Download the new forms at <http://www.lni.wa.gov/TradesLicensing/Electrical/FormPub>.

The electrical program will continue to monitor and evaluate the budget in an attempt to maintain the fee reduction.

● Mandatory “Classroom” Electrical Training Classes For All Trainees

A new law passed last year requires trainees to have at least 16 hours of approved basic “classroom” electrical training to be eligible to renew training certificate. Any trainee renewing after July 1, 2007 must meet the new requirement.

Basic classroom classes may be attended by electricians and administrators and used to satisfy the continuing education requirements necessary for renewal of their electrician or administrator certificate.

Classroom education is not the same as the continuing education classes required for electrician and administrator renewal. All basic classroom education training must be conducted in a classroom setting. Non-classroom correspondence and internet classes will not be allowed for trainees. During the class, each attendee will be tested on the class content and must receive a score of 70% or higher to successfully complete the class. Only department approved classes will be allowed.

Equivalent training classes taken as part of an approved apprenticeship program under chapter 49.04 RCW or an electrical training program under RCW 19.28.191(1)(h) will fulfill the classroom electrical training class requirement.

Education providers should review WAC 296-46B-970 before submitting a classroom education electrical training course to the department for approval. Classroom education classes must be on the RCW 19.28, WAC 296-46B, the currently adopted National Electrical Code or electrical theory based on currently published materials that are readily available through retail purchase. All classes are required to be at least 8 hours in length. Classes may be divided into intervals of not less than two hours each so long as the class is completed within a one month period.

● “Grandfathering Opportunity” For Well Drillers Has Closed

The “Grandfathering” opportunity allowed by SSB 6225, a law relating to the business of installing, repairing, and maintaining domestic water pumping systems, expired on December 31, 2006. The “Grandfathering” opportunity allowed individuals to submit an affidavit of experience and receive plumbing and/or electrical certification without examination.

Provisions in SSB 6225 allow for an “open window” opportunity, to qualify previous work experience, through June 30, 2007. Affidavits of experience must be received no later than July 1, 2007. At that time all opportunities to apply previous “on the job experience” will expire. To gain work experience credit after that time, a worker must have a valid training certificate and work under the direct supervision of a properly certified individual while in the employment of a properly licensed contractor.

To take advantage of the open window opportunity individuals must fill out form F500-103-000 and submit it to L&I by the July 1, 2007 deadline. Please visit the link below to download form:

<http://www.lni.wa.gov/TradesLicensing/Electrical/FormPub>

● WAC 296-46B Rules Are Effective

While the RCW remains unchanged, new WAC rules became effective December 31, 2006. For an overview of some of the more significant changes read the October 2006 electrical currents. View the new WAC 296-46B rules at:

<http://www.lni.wa.gov/TradesLicensing/Electrical/LawRulePol/LawsRules>

Printed copies of the new rules will be available for purchase by the end of January in all field offices.

● **Leveling The Playing Field, Accomplishments For 2006**

The electrical industry in Washington State is alive and well and has been running in high gear for several years now. Along with this abundance of work comes the potential for some companies or individuals to violate the licensing and installation laws. L&I is actively doing everything possible to reduce the impacts of the underground economy in the electrical industry.

As a result our electrical inspectors' efforts, assisted by the E-CORE team, we have had a successful year working proactively with the industry and combating companies and individuals not playing by the rules. For the 2006 calendar year the electrical program issued 5,572 electrical violations. Half of the 5,572 violations were unlicensed contracting, uncertified electricians, or doing work with no permit.

● **Addendum To Class B Permit For Low Voltage And HVAC/R Controls**

Last month's Electrical Currents article on the use of Class B labels contained the following sentence: *"However, if fire alarm inputs or outputs are not part of a "required" fire alarm system (i.e. options to a dwelling's low voltage security system) these installations would be eligible for the Class B permit (refer to December 2005 Electrical Currents Article)."*

The use of the word "required" was confusing to some people who concluded that if the installation was not required by a building official, then a Class B permit would suffice. This is not true. The WAC requires a standard permit to be used for all wiring and equipment associated with any of the excluded systems (fire alarm, nurse call, lighting control, industrial automation/control, or energy management). These circuits are not eligible for Class B labels.

● **Square D Recalls Safety Switches Due To Shock Or Electrocution Hazard**

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC), in cooperation with Square D Company announced a voluntary recall of General Duty Safety Switches. The CPSC determined that the safety switch can continue to supply electricity even after being placed in the "OFF" position. This poses the risk of an electric shock or electrocution hazard. Consumers should stop using recalled products immediately unless otherwise instructed by the CPSC. Contact Square D at www.us.squared.com or (877) 202-9046.

The recall includes General Duty 30 and 60 ampere, 240 volt, 1-phase and 3-phase NEMA 3R safety switches. The switches are typically used to control the flow of electricity to outdoor motorized units that are hardwired to an electrical system such as outdoor air conditioning and heating (HVAC) equipment. The switches contain "ON" and "OFF" positions. The "OFF" position is designed to cut the flow of electricity to an outdoor motorized unit to protect the person who is servicing the unit.

The recalled switches have the following date codes and catalog number printed on the bottom of the wiring label inside the front cover or on the bottom of the package label:

Date Codes - 06371 through 06446

Catalog Numbers - D211NRB, D211NRBBP, D211NRBCP, D221NRB, D221NRBCP, D321NRB, D321NRBCP, DU221RB, DU222RB, DU321RB, DU322RB.

● **Electrical Question of the Month**

This Month's Question: Temporary electrical power and lighting installations shall be permitted for a period not to exceed ___ days for holiday decorative lighting and similar purposes? **A) 30, B) 60, C) 90, D)** until it's no longer needed.

Last Month's Question: Control circuit transformers rated less than ____ volt-amperes (VA) and that are an integral part of the motor controller and located within the motor controller enclosure shall be permitted to be protected by primary overcurrent devices, impedance limiting means, or other inherent protective means. **A) 50, B) 75, C) 100, D) 250.** The answer is: **A [NEC 430.72 (c)(3)].**