

SPECIAL EDITION

COVID-19 Electrical Program Impacts

This special edition newsletter is dedicated to providing important updates regarding how the COVID-19 response may affect services the electrical program provides to our customers. Of course, developments are changing rapidly, so watch for updates in future editions.

Restricted Access to L&I Front Counters

The need for increased social distancing to slow the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19) has resulted in L&I halting walk-in visits to its regional offices.

Beginning March 18, customers must have a confirmed appointment between 10 a.m. and 2:30 p.m. to be allowed in the offices. Public doors to L&I's regional locations will be locked as part of this temporary policy.

Customers are encouraged to use the option of doing business with L&I over the phone and online during all normal business hours. Business that must be conducted in-person will now require a call to the local office for customers to make an appointment.

People can find phone numbers for all [regional offices](#) on the L&I website. People can also call the L&I Office of Information and Assistance at 360-902-5800.

These changes in front-counter in-person customer service are in effect until further notice.

Electrical Inspection Impacts

Please be patient with us as we all navigate this situation together. Please let us know when requesting an inspection if there are any concerns with COVID-19 at the inspection site such as high-risk, elderly customers, or quarantine situations. Please communicate these concerns in the comments section of the inspection request. As always, our inspectors will prioritize inspections in an effort to support continued progress on construction projects, but there may be delays with some inspections. Be sure to communicate with your [local inspection office](#) if you have an urgent inspection. Some inspectors, program specialists and supervisors will be working from outside the office, but are available by phone.

In addition, you may consider using a virtual electrical inspection. You can schedule a [Virtual Electrical Inspection](#) (VEI) on the same day at least 30 minutes in advance of when you need it. To use VEI, you will need to download the [Skype Application](#) and create a profile. Use Google Chrome to [schedule](#) your inspection for the day and time you want. You can learn more about VEI by visiting www.lni.wa.gov and search "Virtual."

Contact us: Call 360-902-5299 or **Email:** VirtualElectricalInspection@lni.wa.gov

Safety Tip

- Practice excellent hygiene (wash your hands regularly)
- Maintain personal space (6 ft.)
- Cover minor cuts
- Cover your cough and sneezes
- If you are feeling ill, stay home
- Maintain a positive attitude 😊

April Stakeholder Meetings to be Re-Scheduled

In order to comply with the Governor's emergency proclamation restricting the size of gatherings due to the coronavirus (COVID-19), we are cancelling all stakeholder meetings scheduled in April. We will re-schedule these for later in the year. Watch for future announcements in this newsletter regarding stakeholder meetings scheduled for May and those that will be re-scheduled.

Trainees Who Cannot Get Required Classroom Training for Renewal of Certificates

On March 13, Governor Inslee issued a proclamation prohibiting all public and private universities, colleges, technical schools, apprenticeship programs, and similar schools and programs from conducting in-person classes in all counties of Washington State. This prohibition will last until April 24, 2020, unless extended to a later date. Because of this, holders of training certificates with expiration dates on or after March 13 may not be able to complete the basic classroom instruction required to renew their certificates.

The department will issue a policy allowing those trainees who renew their certificates without completing the required classroom instruction to continue working with their certificate in inactive status until 60 days following April 24, or later if extended beyond that date. This will allow them to complete their required classroom instruction when classes resume. This allowance will apply only to holders of training certificates with expiration dates on or after March 13, 2020 who have renewed and are in inactive ("T") status due to lack of basic classroom instruction. It does not apply to holders of training certificates in expired, archived, or suspended status. It does not apply to holders of electrician, administrator, or master electrician certificates, as online classes are available for continuing education.

Training certificate holders must renew their certificates by paying the usual renewal fee. This can be done online. Follow instructions on the renewal notice or visit the [Electrical Trainee](#) page of our website. All other requirements remain in effect such as submitting affidavits of experience, supervision, and visible display of certificates. Electrical contractors and administrators will not be penalized for employing trainees who are inactive in accordance with the above.

WAC 296-46B Rulemaking Update – Public Hearing to be Held by Conference Call

The department has filed a continuance of the rule proposal CR-102 to make changes to the public hearing scheduled for April 9, 2020 at 10:00 a.m. The hearing will be conducted by conference call to allow for oral public comments and testimony on the proposal rather than holding an in-person meeting. We are strongly encouraging written comments. In addition, we are extending the written comment period until 5 p.m. on Thursday, April 16, 2020.

You can find details and rulemaking documents by visiting the Rule Development section of our [Electrical Laws and Rules](#) webpage. Review the proposals and submit comments if you desire. How to submit comments:

- Mail written comments to: Alicia Curry, Department of Labor & Industries, Field Services and Public Safety Division, PO Box 44400, Olympia, WA 98504-4400.
- Email: Alicia.Curry@Lni.wa.gov, or Fax: 360-902-5292
- Attend the public hearing by conference call: Call 1-866-715-6499. If you receive a busy signal and cannot connect, an alternate number to call is (719) 325-2776. When prompted for the passcode, enter 9862128073 followed by the pound sign (#). The telephonic hearing starts at 10:00 a.m. and will continue until all oral comments are received.

The proposed adoption date for the new rules is May 19, 2020 and the proposed effective date is July 1, 2020. For complete details about the process, see the [October 2019 Electrical Currents](#) Newsletter Special Edition. If you need additional information or have any questions about the rulemaking process, you may contact Alicia Curry at 360-902-6244 or Alicia.Curry@lni.wa.gov.

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