

ELECTRICAL CURRENTS

A Newsletter from the Office of L&I Chief Electrical Inspector Wayne Molesworth September 2022

Question of the Month

True or False?

The Department of Labor and Industries may change the duties of the electrical administrator or master electrician described in [RCW 19.28.061](#) by following the formal WAC development process in the Administrative Procedure Act (Chapter 34.05 RCW). *See the correct answer on Page 2.*

July 1, 2023 Apprenticeship Requirement Rulemaking Update

In last month's newsletter, we announced the start of a rulemaking for apprenticeship requirements beginning July 1, 2023. Our intent is to use the discretion given to our agency for the next two years by the Legislature in SSB 6126, to continue to help the electrical industry while implementing the bill.

Some specific areas we are considering addressing through rulemaking include:

- How to provide for full consideration of trainee hours;
- How to recognize other existing paths toward EL01 exam qualification in addition to apprenticeship completion (i.e. military service recognition; state-licensed electricians from other jurisdictions; electricians with proof of 16,000 hours of experience; and recognition of individuals with 4,000 EL01 industrial/commercial hours lawfully accrued prior to July 1, 2023);
- How to address the period between completion of an apprenticeship program and passage of the exam.

This is possible through the "good cause" exemption found in [RCW 19.28.195](#). The department is still working with stakeholders to find the best path forward using and defining "good cause".

The rulemaking affects [WAC 296-46B-945](#). L&I anticipates filing the proposed rule in late 2022.

If you have questions please email them to SSB6126Implementation@LNI.WA.GOV

Learn more about the rulemaking in the links below.

[CR-101 Preproposal](#)

[Trades & Licensing Rules Under Development](#) (listed alphabetically) to find electrical safety standards, administration, and installation.

[Current electrical rulemaking.](#)

Safety Tip of the Month

Back-to-school season is here again! Be on the lookout for children not only in school zones, but also in residential areas, playgrounds, and parks. Children are unpredictable and often take risks, ignore hazards, and fail to look both ways before crossing the street.

Give them a brake!

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When is Existing Wiring Required to Comply with Current Codes?

Remodeled and repaired structures often involve changing only a portion of the wiring. [WAC 296-46B-010\(14\)](#) gives direction for these existing installations. All previously inspected wiring left untouched and in good condition will be considered acceptable when installed in accordance with the code in force at the time of its initial installation subject to the following considerations:

- The original use and occupancy class of the building or structure remains unchanged.
- Structures damaged by fire may require closer examination to determine suitability of the existing wiring.
 - ⇒ Over-heated insulation will be brittle and will flake off when slightly bent.
 - ⇒ Close examination may reveal physical damage by heat and structural collapse .
- Modifications to knob-and-tube wiring must be in accordance with [WAC 296-46B-394](#).
- Load centers will be inspected for overheating, grounding and bonding, and proper overcurrent protection.
- The grounding electrode system must be intact, and if the service is replaced, must meet current requirements.
- There are some specific NEC® requirements for upgrading existing wiring (e.g., 210.12(B) AFCI protection, 406.4 (D) receptacle replacements).

As always, inspectors and electricians must use their training and judgment when determining whether or not wiring must be updated.

Trainee or Apprentice—What is the Difference?

There are two types of trainees. Only one is an apprentice.

An apprentice is a trainee who is registered in a Washington State approved electrical apprenticeship program. Apprenticeship programs are formal training regulated by the [Washington State Apprenticeship and Training Council](#). Typically, employers, employer associations, and labor unions sponsor apprenticeship programs.

If you are trainee who is not registered with an apprenticeship program, you are not an apprentice.

[Find a 01 apprenticeship program by county and occupation](#). Occupations for (01) electricians are: Construction Electrician, Inside Electrician, or Inside Wireman.

Both trainees and registered apprentices must [renew](#) their trainee certificate every 2 years until they pass an exam to become an electrician.

Trainees and registered apprentices can view their hours of experience by using the [Verify](#) tool.

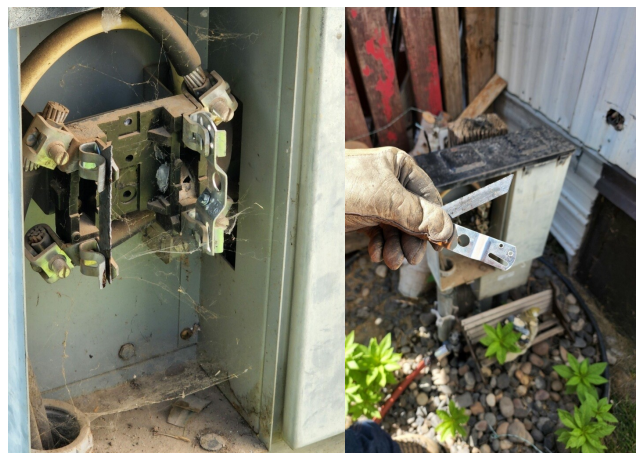
Answer to the Question of the Month:

False.

Only the legislature can change the RCW. The department has the responsibility to create rules (with stakeholder and Technical Advisory Committee input), but the rules cannot require anything that is not authorized in the statute.

Picture of the Month

An inspector went out to a home that had no power. During the inspection a couple “red flags” went up and the inspector decided to take a closer look at the meter. The seal and the meter had been tampered with and when the utility came, this is what they found.



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