

SENATE BILL REPORT

ESSB 6521

As Passed Senate, February 12, 1996

Title: An act relating to electrical administration procedures.

Brief Description: Establishing electrical administration procedures.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Labor, Commerce & Trade (originally sponsored by Senators Heavey and Sutherland; by request of Department of Labor & Industries).

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Labor, Commerce & Trade: 1/30/96, 1/31/96 [DPS].
Passed Senate, 2/12/96, 43-6.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON LABOR, COMMERCE & TRADE

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 6521 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Pelz, Chair; Heavey, Vice Chair; A. Anderson, Deccio, Franklin, Fraser, McDonald, Newhouse and Wojahn.

Staff: Traci Ratzliff (786-7452)

Background: The Department of Labor and Industries administers the electrical contractor licensing and electrical certificates of competency statutes. The department issues the following licenses and certificates: electrical contractor license, electrical contractor administrator certificate, journeyman electrician certificate, specialty electrician certificate, and trainee certificate.

An electrical contractor's license may be obtained by submitting an application to the department, posting a bond or other security in the amount of \$4,000, and employing an individual who possesses a general or specialty electrical contractor administrator certificate. The administrator is responsible for ensuring that all electrical work completed by the firm is done in compliance with state laws. An administrator must take an exam in order to obtain a certificate.

A training certificate may be obtained by individuals who are enrolled in an electrical construction trade apprenticeship program or who are learning the electrical trade. Such individuals may work in the electrical trade if they are supervised by a certified electrician and they possess a training certificate. A training certificate must be renewed annually. A trainee is required, when renewing the certificate, to submit to the department a list of the holder's employers for the previous year and the number of hours worked for each employer.

The department has authority to deny, suspend or revoke electrical licenses and certificates for certain violations of state law.

The department and certain cities are responsible for inspecting electrical wiring, and equipment in or on all buildings to assure compliance with state law. Questions have been raised regarding whether all electrical wiring and equipment must be visually inspected or whether other testing methods may be utilized to verify the safety of such wiring and equipment.

Summary of Bill: The department is authorized to deny renewal of an electrical license or certificate if outstanding penalties are owed for a final citation.

The department is prohibited from accepting an application for an electrical contractor administrator's certificate from an applicant whose previous administrator certificate was revoked because of a serious violation of state law.

The department is authorized to audit the records of an electrical contractor to verify the hours of experience submitted by an electrical trainee. The information obtained from the Department of Labor and Industries during the audit is confidential information and is not open to public inspection.

The language governing the inspection of electrical wiring and equipment is modified to allow an inspector to employ any testing methods that assures that wiring and electrical equipment is in conformance with the state electrical code.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 19, 1996.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: The department has reviewed the electrical licensing and inspection programs over the last year and found a number of weaknesses in this program. This bill will provide needed changes that will help to correct these weaknesses.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: PRO: Mike Watson, Dept. of Labor and Industries; Mike Grumwald, IBEW Local 76; Richard King, IBEW; Brian Alvensleban, Washington State Electrical Contractors Assn.; Larry Stevens, National Electrical Contractors Assn.

House Amendment(s): The department may not accept an application for an administrator's certificate for up to two years if the applicant's previous administrator's certificate was revoked for a serious violation and all appeals have been exhausted.