

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1631

As Reported by House Committee On:
Commerce & Labor

Title: An act relating to regulating fire protection sprinkler system contractors.

Brief Description: Regulating fire protection sprinkler system contractors.

Sponsors: Representatives McCoy, Cooper, Conway, Romero, Lovick, Simpson and Kenney.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Commerce & Labor: 2/12/03, 2/19/03 [DP].

Brief Summary of Bill

- Requires the state director of fire protection to adopt rules defining infractions and fines applicable to fire protection sprinkler system contractors.
- Establishes civil penalties for contractors who commit infractions or fail to obtain certificates of competency.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE & LABOR

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 6 members: Representatives Conway, Chair; Wood, Vice Chair; Chandler, Ranking Minority Member; Hudgins, Kenney and McCoy.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 3 members: Representatives Condotta, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Crouse and Holmquist.

Staff: Jill Reinmuth (786-7134).

Background:

The state director of fire protection (the state fire marshal) administers licensing requirements for persons who install fire sprinkler systems. To be licensed, a contractor must employ a holder of a certificate of competency issued by the state fire marshal, meet minimum insurance requirements, and pay a license fee.

Persons who install fire sprinkler systems may be subject to criminal penalties. A licensed contractor who maliciously constructs, installs, or maintains a fire sprinkler system in a way that threatens the safety of someone in a fire is guilty of a class C felony. An unlicensed person who constructs, installs, or maintains a fire sprinkler system in any dwelling other than an owner-occupied, single-family dwelling is guilty of a gross misdemeanor.

Summary of Bill:

The state fire marshal must adopt rules defining infractions and fines applicable to fire protection sprinkler system contractors. A licensed contractor who commits these infractions is subject to civil penalties from \$200 to \$5,000. One who fails to obtain a certificate of competency is subject to civil penalties from \$1,000 to \$5,000.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: This bill is to punish those who do not follow the rules. The current laws do not have teeth. The fire marshal cannot address acts dealing with safety and property preservation that are serious, but do not rise to the level of a criminal violation. This bill allows the fire marshal to draw up civil penalties that can be implemented statewide. If the law regulating fire protection sprinkler system contractors is worth having, it is worth enforcing.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Representative McCoy, prime sponsor; Paul O'Connor, Fire Sprinkler Advisory Board; and Dan Sexton, Washington State Association of Plumbers, Pipefitters & Steamfitters.