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**Commerce & Labor Committee**

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**ESSB 5713**

**Brief Description:** Concerning electrical work.

**Sponsors:** Senate Committee on Commerce & Trade (originally sponsored by Senators Honeyford, Prentice, Hewitt, Rasmussen, Mulliken, Sheahan and Oke).

**Brief Summary of Engrossed Substitute Bill**

- Establishes exemptions from certain electrical code requirements for appliance repair work, equipment repair work, boiler work, medical devices, and electrical work that is incidental to plumbing work.
- Establishes an exemption from certain plumbing code requirements for plumbing work that is incidental to electrical work.
- Authorizes the Department of Labor and Industries to create a small job electrical work system.
- Establishes classroom training and continuing education requirements for plumbers.

**Hearing Date:** 3/24/2003

**Staff:** Jill Reinmuth (786-7134).

**Background:**

The Department of Labor and Industries (Department) administers various state laws governing construction-related businesses and trades, including persons performing electrical, plumbing, and boiler work.

Electrical Work

State law requires that nearly all work involving electrical wiring, appliances, devices, and equipment be inspected. Property owners and electrical contractors must purchase electrical work permits for electrical installations or alterations, including remodeling and maintenance work. The Department, or the applicable city or town, must inspect the work. There are a number of exemptions to these permitting and inspection requirements in statute and/or rule. For example, certain medical devices are deemed to be in compliance with state

law. By rule, circuit breakers, fuses, thermostats, small motors, and certain other electrical devices are exempt from permitting and inspection requirements.

State law also requires that persons who engage in the business of installing or maintaining certain wires or equipment have either a general electrical contractor license or an appropriate specialty electrical contractor license. Similarly, persons who perform such work must be certified as journey level electricians or appropriate specialty electricians. The Department has recently proposed rules establishing specialties in appliance repair and equipment repair. To become certified, persons must meet certain experience and/or educational requirements, and pass an examination. There are a number of exemptions to these licensing and certification requirements.

### Boiler Work

State law authorizes the Board of Boiler Rules to make rules governing the safe construction, installation, and use of boilers and unfired pressure vessels. These rules are enforced through annual or biannual safety inspections. There are a number of types of equipment, including domestic water heating tanks, that are exempt from these rules.

### Plumbing Work

State law requires that persons who engage in plumbing work by way of trade or business, or who employ a person to performing plumbing work, have a plumbing contractor license. Similarly, state law requires that persons who perform plumbing work be certified as plumbers. To become certified, persons must meet certain experience and/or educational requirements, and pass an examination. There are a number of exemptions to this certification requirement.

### **Summary of Bill:**

Electrical permitting, inspection, and licensing requirements are modified for certain appliance repair work, equipment repair work, boiler work, medical devices, and electrical work that is incidental to plumbing work. Electrical certification requirements are modified for medical devices and electrical work that is incidental to plumbing work. Plumbing certification and licensing requirements are modified for plumbing work that is incidental to electrical work. The Department of Labor and Industries is authorized to create a small job electrical work system. Classroom training and continuing education requirements for plumbers are established.

### Appliance Repair

The repair, maintenance, or replacement of appliances is exempt from electrical permitting, inspection, and licensing requirements. The scope of work applicable to the "repair, maintenance, or replacement of appliances" is specified in a definition.

### Equipment Repair

The repair, maintenance, or replacement of industrial and commercial equipment is exempt from electrical permitting, and inspection requirements.

The repair, maintenance, or replacement of industrial and commercial equipment is exempt from electrical licensing requirements only if the person doing the work meets certain requirements. The person must have a letter from a manufacturer of the category of equipment recognizing the person's qualifications to do the work. In addition, the person doing the work must have 2,000 hours of experience doing the work, or be directly supervised by a person with such experience.

The scope of work applicable to the "repair, maintenance, or replacement of industrial and commercial equipment" is specified in a definition.

### Medical Devices

The installation, maintenance, and repair of medical devices deemed in compliance with all requirements imposed by state law on electricians and electrical installations are exempt from electrical licensing and certification requirements. Such work must be performed by qualified factory engineers or third-party service companies with equivalent training. Such work does not include providing electrical feeds into power distribution units or installation of conduits and raceways.

### Boilers

The installation, repair, maintenance, or replacement of boilers is exempt from electrical permitting, inspection, and licensing requirements.

A person may not work on electrical controls on a boiler unless the person has been issued an electrical boiler certificate from the chief boiler inspector. To obtain the certificate, a person must pass an examination, or demonstrate that he or she had 24 months of experience working on boilers with electrical controls prior to January 1, 2003.

The Chief Boiler Inspector and the Board of Boiler Rules must prepare the examination with the advice of the Chief Electrical Inspector. The Chief Boiler Inspector must charge a fee to cover the cost of administering the program. The fees are deposited in the Pressure Systems Safety Fund.

### Incidental Work

Certain electrical work that is incidental to plumbing work is exempt from electrical permitting, inspection, certification, and licensing requirements. The work must be done by a certified plumber who is either a registered contractor or who is working for a registered contractor. The plumber must notify the owner if he or she encounters electrical hazards while doing the incidental electrical work. The scope of the incidental electrical work is specified.

Certain plumbing work that is incidental to electrical work is exempt from plumbing certification and licensing requirements. The work must be done by a certified journeyman

electrician or residential specialty electrician who is employed by a licensed electrical contractor. The scope of the incidental plumbing work is also specified.

### Small Jobs

The like-in-kind replacement of certain equipment is exempt from permitting and inspection requirements. The types of exempt equipment are circuit breakers, fuses, residential luminaires, lamps, snap switches, dimmers, receptacle outlets, thermostats, heating elements, luminaire ballasts with exact same ballasts, contactors, relays, timers, starters, circuit boards, similar control components, and 10 horsepower or smaller motors.

In addition the installation, alteration, and maintenance of electrical systems for travel trailers are exempt from permitting and inspection requirements.

The Department is authorized to create a "small job electrical work" system. Inspections are not required for all electrical work, and may be conducted on a random basis or upon request. Permit fees may be less than actual inspection costs. Cities that adopt and enforce ordinances governing electrical construction must participate in the small job electrical work system.

The Department must give reasonable notice of inspections, and may inspect only with the approval of the person whose premises are being inspected. Prior to conducting an inspection, the Department must notify the person that he or she has the right to refuse the inspection.

### Plumber Training and Continuing Education

To become a certified plumber, a person must have completed not less than 16 hours of classroom training on certain items needed to do incidental electrical work. To renew a certificate of competency, a plumber must have completed 16 hours of continuing education, including four hours related to electrical safety, in the past two years.

**Rules Authority:** The bill does not contain provisions addressing the rule-making powers of an agency.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Requested on March 19, 2003.

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