

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SB 6206

As Reported by House Committee On:
Labor & Workforce Development

Title: An act relating to telecommunications installations.

Brief Description: Concerning telecommunications installations.

Sponsors: Senators Honeyford, Conway and Holmquist Newbry.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Labor & Workforce Development: 2/25/14 [DP].

Brief Summary of Bill

- Modifies the scope of telecommunications work to include providing operational power in certain circumstances.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON LABOR & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 9 members: Representatives Sells, Chair; Reykdal, Vice Chair; Manweller, Ranking Minority Member; Condotta, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Christian, Green, G. Hunt, Moeller and Ormsby.

Staff: Joan Elgee (786-7106).

Background:

An electrical contractor license is required to engage in the business of installing or maintaining wires or equipment to convey electric current, or equipment to be operated by electric current. A general electrical contractor license allows the licensee to engage in all aspects of the electrical business. Electrical contractor specialty licenses include limited energy (06) and telecommunications (09). To work as an electrician, an individual generally must have a journey level or specialty electrician certificate of competency. The specialty certificates mirror the specialty contractor licenses.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Engaging in the business of installing or maintaining telecommunications systems requires a telecommunications contractor (09) license. (General electrical contractors and limited energy specialty contractors may also engage in telecommunications work.) Individual worker certification is not required for telecommunications work.

"Telecommunication systems" are the structured cabling systems between the local service provider and the customer's premises structured cabling system. "Telecommunication systems" include premises switching equipment, fiber optic, and other limited-energy interconnections associated with telecommunications systems or appliances. Excluded are horizontal cabling used for certain fire protection and alarms, and lighting control systems. Telecommunications systems may interface with other building signal systems, including security and alarms, within telecommunications closets or at extended points of demarcation.

An administrative hearing resulted in a decision that work performed on cables that carry both data and low voltage electricity, such as power over Ethernet devices, is outside the scope of 09 work and requires an 06 electrician.

The Department of Labor and Industries (Department) issues licenses and certificates of competency and otherwise administers the regulation of electricians and electrical work and telecommunications.

Summary of Bill:

"Telecommunications systems" include premises switching equipment providing operational power to the telecommunications device and power distribution associated with telecommunications systems. A rule stating that horizontal cabling for a telecommunications outlet, necessary to interface with other systems including security and alarms outside of a closet, is telecommunications work is placed in statute. Lighting, in addition to lighting control systems, is excluded from "telecommunications systems."

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date: The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect immediately.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) Telecommunications is a field that keeps changing. We need to let the Department make the rules rather than have the Legislature have to come back and change the law. This is clarifying language to allow contractors to do what they have done for the last 30 years. The Department had a lack of understanding of terminology. Proponents worked with stakeholders including the Department. Without the emergency clause, people will continue to get cited.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Senator Honeyford, prime sponsor; Ron Main, Broadway Communications Association of Washington; and Kerry Cox, Integrated Transaction Control Systems.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.