

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5985

As of January 31, 2018

Title: An act relating to plumbers.

Brief Description: Concerning plumbers.

Sponsors: Senator Fortunato.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Labor & Commerce: 1/31/18.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Provides that a certified plumber must, as an alternative to being present at the same job site as a trainee plumber, be available via a mobile device that allows the certified plumber to provide direction to the trainee.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON LABOR & COMMERCE

Staff: Jarrett Sacks (786-7448)

Background: In general, to perform plumbing work, a person must have a journey level or specialty certificate, a temporary permit, or a trainee certificate issued by the Department of Labor and Industries (L&I). A plumbing certificate is not required for an individual to do plumbing work at their residence, place of business, or on other property owned by the individual, or for plumbing work done on a farm.

To receive a journey level or specialty certificate, a person must meet certain work requirements and pass an examination. To qualify as a journey level plumber, a person must have 8000 documented hours, and not less than four years, working as a plumber trainee under the supervision of a certified plumber. To qualify as a specialty plumber, the number of hours one must work to qualify varies by specialty.

Plumber trainees must have a trainee certificate and work under supervision. Trainees must be supervised by a person with a journey level or specialty certificate, or with a temporary permit. The supervisor must be on the same job site for a minimum of 75 percent of each working day. There may not be more than two noncertified plumbers for every one certified

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specialty plumber or journey level plumber working in a specialty, or more than one noncertified plumber for every one certified journey level plumber doing journey level work on a job site. Trainees must renew their licenses every year until they pass the examination to become a journey level or specialty plumber. Additionally, trainees must take eight hours of continuing education per year.

Summary of Bill: As an alternative to a certified plumber being at the same job site as a trainee at least 75 percent of each work day, a journey level plumber or an appropriate specialty plumber must be available via mobile device in a manner that allows both audio and visual direction to the trainee from the supervising plumber.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members: No.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: Plumbers are getting older and the industry cannot train new plumbers fast enough. It is challenging to develop a new workforce for many reasons, including the on-call nature of some plumbing work. Using technology to allow supervision will reduce the costs to consumers. Other industries use this type of technology for training, so plumbing should, too. The bill will allow older plumbers to train new plumbers longer without having to go into the field.

OTHER: Changing how supervision works will not work if there is no accountability for the employers to report plumber hours to L&I.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Phil Fortunato, Prime Sponsor; Todd Allred, Plumbing, Heating, Cooling Contractors of Washington; Kathy Thaut, Plumbing, Heating, Cooling Contractors of Washington; Brian Harding, Plumbing, Heating, Cooling Contractors of Washington.

OTHER: Tim Herbert, Washington Pipe Trades.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: No one.