

FINAL BILL REPORT

SHB 1594

C 119 L 19

Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Clarifying the exemption for wiring and equipment associated with telecommunication installations.

Sponsors: House Committee on Labor & Workplace Standards (originally sponsored by Representatives Chandler and Chapman).

House Committee on Labor & Workplace Standards
Senate Committee on Labor & Commerce

Background:

All wires, equipment, and installations that convey electric current must be in conformity with the electrical laws of the state, which are administered by the Department of Labor and Industries (Department). Electrical installations must comply with the National Electrical Code. Generally, 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, and a certified electrician must perform the work. To be certified, an electrician must meet certain experience and education requirements. An electrical contractor license or telecommunications contractor license is required to install telecommunications systems.

Certain wires and equipment are exempt from the code requirements as well as the licensing and certification requirements. These exemptions include telephone and television wires, and wires and equipment exempt from the National Electrical Code. A separate code, the National Electric Safety Code (NESC), establishes standards for the safety of utility workers (line workers) and the public during the installation, operation, and maintenance of electric supply, communication lines, and associated equipment. The NESC provides for the separation of the power space for power distribution at the top of a utility pole, and the communications space for cable and other attachments. The zone between the power space and the communications space is the communication worker safety zone.

Under the authority of the Washington Industrial Safety and Health Act, the Department has adopted rules governing the safety of utility workers, which include training requirements. The rules require that the work be performed in accordance with the NESC. A separate set of

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safety rules governs the work of electrical installations by certified electricians and related work.

A electric meter base provides the power to the electric meter.

Summary:

Wires and equipment within the communication worker safety zone and supply space, as defined in the NESC, on poles supporting utility transmission or distribution lines or wires, are exempt from the regulation of electrical installations under the electrical laws.

Electric utility-owned equipment between a meter base and meter is also exempt.

Votes on Final Passage:

House	97	0
Senate	46	0

Effective: July 28, 2019