
**Labor & Workplace Standards
Committee**

HB 1393

Brief Description: Concerning the requirements to obtain a journey level electrician certificate of competency.

Sponsors: Representatives Schmidt, Chapman, Reeves, Robertson, Rule, Connors, Reed, Eslick, Christian, Pollet and Volz.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Delays the effective date of the requirement to complete an apprenticeship program in order to obtain certification as a journey level electrician, from July 1, 2023, to July 1, 2025.
- Requires the Department of Labor and Industries to conduct a study on the availability and accessibility of journey level electrical apprenticeship programs, including specified elements, and submit a report with its findings to the Governor and the Legislature by December 1, 2023.

Hearing Date: 1/31/23

Staff: Kelly Leonard (786-7147).

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 person must have a journey level or specialty electrician certificate of competency in order to work as an electrician. To obtain a certificate of competency, a person must complete certain

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requirements and pass an examination. The Department of Labor and Industries (L&I) issues licenses and certificates of competency and otherwise administers the regulation of electricians and electrical work. L&I may enter a reciprocal agreement with another state to accept the credentials of the other state if the requirements are equal to Washington's standards.

In 2018, the state passed Substitute Senate Bill 6126, which modified the eligibility requirements for taking the examination for a journey level electrician certificate of competency, effective July 1, 2023.

Until July 1, 2023, there are two primary pathways for obtaining certification as a journey level electrician, either by completing a certain number of hours of work experience with classroom training, or by completing an apprenticeship program. For the first pathway, a person must work in the electrical construction trade for at least 8,000 hours under the supervision of a certified electrician, of which at least 4,000 hours must be spent working in commercial or industrial installations, and meet classroom training requirements. Training in the electrical construction trade in the military or up to two years of classroom work in certain school programs may be credited towards the required hours of work experience. For the second pathway, a person must complete an apprenticeship program approved by the Washington Apprenticeship and Training Council (WATC).

Beginning July 1, 2023, these two pathways are merged, and any applicant must complete an apprenticeship program approved by WATC or equivalent apprenticeship program approved by L&I. The program must include at least 8,000 hours of work in the electrical construction trade under the supervision of a certified electrician, of which at least 4,000 hours must be spent working in commercial or industrial installations. Experience in the electrical construction trade in the military, or up to two years of classroom work in certain school programs, may be credited towards work hours required by the apprenticeship program. From July 1, 2023, until July 1, 2025, L&I may permit an applicant who obtained experience and training equivalent to a journey level apprenticeship program if the applicant had good cause for not completing the minimum hours of work under the new standards.

Summary of Bill:

The effective date of the requirement for all applicants seeking certification as journey level electricians to complete an apprenticeship program is delayed until July 1, 2025. From July 1, 2025, until July 1, 2027, L&I may permit an applicant who obtained experience and training equivalent to a journey level apprenticeship program if the applicant had good cause for not completing the minimum hours of work under the new standards.

L&I must conduct a study on the availability and accessibility of journey level electrical apprenticeship programs, including determining:

- the number and geographic locations of the programs and if they are union affiliated,

- nonunion affiliated with open enrollment, or single employer programs;
- the number and geographic locations of trainees currently enrolled in the programs;
- the number and geographic locations of trainees currently working towards qualifying for certification who are not yet enrolled in a program but who will need to enroll in a program in order to comply with the requirements to complete an apprenticeship program by July 1, 2025; and
- the number and geographic locations of employers of trainees that will need to become registered training agents with a program in order for their trainee employees to be enrolled in a program, taking into account individual employer preferences to be a training agent for a union affiliated or nonunion affiliated program.

In conducting the study, L&I must conduct a survey of current trainees and employers of electrical contractors no later than September 1, 2023. L&I must submit a report with its findings to the Governor and Legislature by December 1, 2023.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 30, 2023.

Effective Date: Sections 1, 2, and 4 through 6 of the bill contain an emergency clause and take effect immediately. Section 3 takes effect on July 1, 2025.