

# HOUSE BILL REPORT

## HB 2253

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### As Passed Legislature

**Title:** An act relating to telecommunications installations.

**Brief Description:** Concerning telecommunications installations.

**Sponsors:** Representatives Manweller, Sells, Johnson and Ryu.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:**

Labor & Workforce Development: 1/23/14, 1/24/14 [DP].

**Floor Activity:**

Passed House: 2/17/14, 96-0.

Senate Amended.

Passed Senate: 3/7/14, 48-0.

House Concurred.

Passed House: 3/10/14, 98-0.

Passed Legislature.

### Brief Summary of Bill

- Modifies the scope of telecommunications work to include providing operational power in certain circumstances.
- Allows, until July 1, 2015, certain telecommunications workers to apply unsupervised work experience towards meeting the requirements for a limited energy system specialty electrician certificate of competency.

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### 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:**

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*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.*

### Electrical Contracting: General.

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).

The scope of 06 work is restricted to low-voltage circuits and includes telecommunications, certain alarms, and lighting control systems.

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. To take the journey level examination, an applicant must work in the electrical construction trade for at least 8,000 hours. For the limited energy specialty certificate, an applicant must work in the specialty for at least 4,000 hours to take the examination.

To obtain the necessary work experience to become a journey level or specialty electrician, an applicant must obtain an electrical training certificate, and in general, trainees must work under the supervision of a journey level or the appropriate specialty electrician.

### Electrical Contracting: Telecommunications.

General electrical and limited energy specialty contractors may also engage in telecommunications work.

Engaging in the business of installing or maintaining telecommunications systems requires a telecommunications contractor (09) license. 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."

Before July 1, 2015, telecommunications workers who obtain a training certificate may apply unsupervised work experience towards obtaining the required work experience to take the examination to become a limited energy system 06 specialty electrician. The work experience must have been obtained while the worker was employed by a general electrical 01 or limited energy system specialty 06 contractor. The applicant receives one-hour credit for every two hours of work. Evidence of the work experience must be submitted in the form of an affidavit prescribed by the Department.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

**Effective Date:** This bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed, except for section 1 relating to the definition of "telecommunications systems," which contains an emergency clause and takes effect immediately.

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony:**

(In support) This bill tinkers with the scope to address a situation in which technology has moved faster than the rules. It was not intended that 09 telephone installers cannot install telephones. This bill does not expand the scope of work; it clarifies what telecommunications companies have been doing for 20 years. It was understood by stakeholders and the Department of Labor and Industries when the 09 contractor license was created in 1999 that installers could install the devices and provide power. There is a lack of understanding of how telecommunications systems function.

All stakeholders were involved.

The emergency clause is necessary because people are liable for citations without the bill.

(Opposed) None.

**Persons Testifying:** Representative Manweller, prime sponsor; Kerry Cox, Integrated Transaction Control Systems; David McLaughlin, International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers; and Ron Main, Broadband Communications Association of Washington.

**Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying:** None.