

SENATE BILL REPORT

SSB 5749

As Passed Senate, March 19, 1997

Title: An act relating to regulation of plumbers.

Brief Description: Providing for a certificate of competency as a medical gas piping installer.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Commerce & Labor (originally sponsored by Senators Heavey, McCaslin, Winsley, Haugen and Deccio).

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Commerce & Labor: 2/26/97, 2/27/97, 2/28/97 [DPS].
Passed Senate, 3/19/97, 44-1.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE & LABOR

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5749 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Schow, Chair; Horn, Vice Chair; Franklin, Fraser and Heavey.

Staff: Traci Ratzliff (786-7452)

Background: Under current law, a person may not engage in the trade of plumbing unless he or she has a journeyman certificate, a specialty certificate, a temporary permit, or a training certificate. A contractor may not employ a person to engage in the plumbing trade unless the person holds the appropriate certificate or permit.

Plumbing means the craft of installing, altering, repairing and renovating portable water systems, liquid waste systems, and medical gas piping in a building. Medical gas piping includes: oxygen, nitrous oxygen, high pressure nitrogen, medical compressed air, and medical vacuum systems.

The Department of Labor and Industries administers the certification programs for plumbers. Individuals desiring to obtain certification must meet certain experience or educational requirements. In addition, individuals must pass an examination which tests general knowledge and practical procedures of the trade, and familiarity with applicable plumbing codes and administrative rules of the department.

A plumbing apprentice may work in the trade if directly supervised by a certified journeyman or certified specialty plumber. An apprentice and all individuals learning the plumbing trade are required to obtain a training certificate from the department.

Currently, journeyman or specialty plumbers may install medical gas piping in buildings.

Summary of Bill: A "medical gas piping installer" endorsement to a journeyman plumber's certificate of competency is established.

Beginning, July 1, 1998, no individual may install or offer to install medical gas piping without holding a journeyman plumber's certificate of competency and a medical gas piping installer's endorsement. A contractor may not employ a person to install medical gas piping unless he or she holds a journeyman plumber's certificate of competency and a medical gas piping installer's endorsement.

Individuals desiring to obtain a medical gas piping installer endorsement must meet requirements established by the department, must pass an examination that contains written and practical elements related to the installation of medical gas piping, and pay the required examination fee.

The department is authorized to approve medical gas piping installer training courses and to set the fees for such courses. The department may enter into a contract with a professional testing agency to develop, administer and score the medical gas piping installer examination.

An individual who holds a training certificate and has successfully completed or is enrolled in an approved medical gas piping installer training course may work on medical gas piping systems if he or she is under the direct supervision of a certified medical gas piping installer.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on February 18, 1997.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect on July 1, 1998.

Testimony For: The installation of medical piping is very technical. Therefore, it needs to be done by well-trained individuals. This bill will assure that those who install such piping are adequately trained.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: PRO: Senator Heavey, prime sponsor; Larry Stevens, Mechanical Contractors Association; Kevin Morris, Department of Labor & Industries; Dan Sexton, United Association of Plumbers and Pipefitters; Ronald Braun and Charles Arnone, Tri-state Plumbing.

House Amendment(s): The amendment makes a technical correction only.