

HOUSE BILL REPORT

ESB 6630

As Reported by House Committee On:
Commerce & Labor

Title: An act relating to certification of electricians.

Brief Description: Providing for certification as a master electrician.

Sponsors: Senators Prentice, Honeyford, Rasmussen and Sheahan.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Commerce & Labor: 2/25/02, 2/28/02 [DPA].

Brief Summary of Engrossed Bill
(As Amended by House Committee)

- Expresses legislative finding that electrician certification laws may need to be updated.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE & LABOR

Majority Report: Do pass as amended. Signed by 5 members: Representatives Conway, Chair; Wood, Vice Chair; Kenney, Lysen and McMorris.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 2 members: Representatives Clements, Ranking Minority Member; and Chandler.

Staff: Jill Reinmuth (786-7134).

Background:

The Department of Labor and Industries administers electrical contracting and certification laws. The department licenses electrical contractors; certifies electrical administrators, journeyman electricians, and specialty electricians; and issues training certificates to noncertified persons.

Electrical Contractors: The licensing requirements for electrical contractors include a requirement that an electrical administrator be designated as the contractor's

administrator.

Electrical Administrators: An administrator may renew his or her certificate without examination.

Specialty Electricians: To take a specialty electrician exam, a person must have worked in that specialty for two years, or successfully completed a state-approved apprenticeship program in that specialty. Years of a technical or trade school program may not be substituted for years of work experience.

Noncertified Persons: An appropriate certified person must supervise a noncertified person. The certified person must be on the same job site as the noncertified person at least 75 percent of each working day. A journeyman electrician may supervise one noncertified person, or up to four noncertified persons enrolled in a technical or trade school program. A specialty electrician may supervise up to two noncertified persons.

Definitions: The definition of "equipment" includes equipment that uses, conducts, or is operated by electricity, but excludes plug-in household appliances.

Summary of Amended Bill:

The Legislature finds that electrician certification laws may need to be updated.

Amended Bill Compared to Original Bill:

Sections amending electrical contracting and certification laws are stricken. These sections:

- Established new certifications for master electricians;
- Allowed electrical contractors to designate master electricians as their administrators;
- Permitted electrical administrators to renew certificates without examination only if they completed continuing education course work;
- Modified work experience requirements and technical or trade school program allowances applicable to specialty electricians;
- Modified ratio requirements and job site supervision requirements applicable to noncertified persons;
- Modified the definition of "equipment" to exclude all plug-in appliances and certain equipment to be determined by the Department of Labor and Industries; and

- Made technical corrections.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: A fiscal note for SB 6630 is available. A fiscal note for ESB 6630 has been requested.

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

Testimony For: This bill is the result of negotiations involving broad industry representation. The stakeholders have all made major compromises. There are a few loopholes that should be closed, and some issues that are yet to be resolved. It is a work in progress. The bill offers a realistic opportunity to comply with state law. It puts reality into the rules. There are concerns about how training time is substituted for work experience, and how that compares to apprenticeship.

Testimony Against: The engrossed bill is better than the original bill. There are concerns about safety and fair competition. Electrical contractors have a 1:1 ratio, but trade schools that compete with electrical contractors may have a 1:4 ratio. There are also technical issues.

Testified: (In support) Ron Fuller and Patrick Woods, Department of Labor and Industries; Eric Mewhinney, Washington Apartment Association and Building Owners and Managers Association; Doug Neyhart, Rental Housing Association of Puget Sound; Melissa Johnson, Washington Hotel and Lodging Association; Dedi Hitchens, Washington Retail Association and the Association of Washington Business Electrician Task Force; and Mark Johnson, National Federation of Independent Business.

(In support with concerns) Richard King and Mike Hendrics, International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers.

(Opposed) Larry Stevens, National Electrical Contractors Association.