
Labor & Workplace Standards Committee

HB 1594

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

Sponsors: Representatives Chandler and Chapman.

<p style="text-align: center;">Brief Summary of Bill</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Changes the regulation of certain work on electric utility poles, and electric-utility owned equipment between a meter base and meter.
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Hearing Date: 1/31/19

Staff: Joan Elgee (786-7106).

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. An electrical contractor license or telecommunications contractor license is required to install telecommunications system.

Certain wires and equipment are exempt from the standards 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,

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communication lines and associated equipment. The NESC provides for the separation of the power supply space for power distribution at the top of a utility pole and communications space for cable, broadband, and other attachments. The zone between the power supply space and the communications space is the communications worker space.

Under the authority of the Washington Industrial Safety and Health Act, the Department has adopted rules governing the safety of worker in electrical power generation, electrical distribution lines and equipment, and related work, and has adopted provisions of the NESC. Separate rules govern the work of electrical installations by certified electricians and related work.

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

Summary of Bill:

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

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

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.