
Labor & Workplace Standards Committee

ESSB 5599

Brief Description: Concerning journey level electrician certifications of competency.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Labor, Commerce & Tribal Affairs (originally sponsored by Senators Saldaña, Keiser, Conway, Das, Hasegawa, Lias, Nobles and Wilson, C.).

Brief Summary of Engrossed Substitute Bill

- Modifies the eligibility requirements for journey level electrician certificate of competency exams.
- Requires the Department of Labor and Industries to make recommendations, conduct outreach, and offer assistance on compliance with the new eligibility requirements.

Hearing Date: 2/22/22

Staff: Lily Smith (786-7175).

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. To work as an electrician, an individual must have a journey level (01) or specialty electrician certificate of competency. The Department of Labor and Industries (L&I) issues licenses and certificates of competency and administers the regulation of electricians and electrical work.

Until July 1, 2023, to obtain certification as a journey level electrician, an individual must work in the electrical construction trade for at least 8,000 hours to take the required examination. An

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applicant may substitute up to two years of certain school programs for two years of work experience. Training in the electrical construction trade in the military may also be credited as work experience. Alternatively, an individual may qualify to take the examination by completing an apprenticeship program approved by the Washington Apprenticeship and Training Council.

Beginning July 1, 2023, applicants for a journey level electrician certificate must have completed an approved apprenticeship program to take the required examination. As part of the apprenticeship, the applicant must have worked in the electrical construction trade for at least 8,000 hours, 4,000 of which must be in electrical installations in industrial or commercial facilities under supervision. An applicant may substitute up to two years of certain school programs for two years of work experience under an apprenticeship. Training in the electrical construction trade in the military may also be credited as work experience under an apprenticeship.

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 to take the examination if the applicant had good cause for not completing the minimum hours of work.

The 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.

Summary of Bill:

Beginning July 1, 2023, to be eligible for the examination for a journey level certificate of competency, an applicant must have:

- successfully completed the work experience and education requirements of an approved 8,000-hour electrical construction trade apprenticeship program. Of the 8,000 hours, 4,000 must be in new electrical installations in industrial or commercial facilities under supervision;
- successfully completed an 8,000-hour electrical construction trade apprenticeship program in another jurisdiction equivalent to an apprenticeship program approved in Washington, 4,000 hours of which must be new electrical installations in industrial or commercial facilities;
- 16,000 hours of experience in electrical construction trade installing and maintaining electrical wiring and equipment in another jurisdiction, 8,000 hours of which must be new electrical installations in industrial or commercial facilities; or
- 8,000 hours of experience in the electrical construction trade while serving in a construction battalion in the armed forces of the United States.

The provision allowing L&I, from July 1, 2023, until July 1, 2025, to permit an applicant who obtained equivalent training and experience to a journey level apprenticeship program to take the examination if the applicant establishes good cause, is repealed.

By October 31, 2022, L&I must make recommendations to the Legislature on potential solutions and incentives to help rural electrical contractors come into compliance with apprenticeship standards, including adequate electrical apprenticeship capacity. When developing the recommendations, L&I, or its electrical standards subcommittee, must allow for input from interested parties, including rural electrical contractors. The L&I must also allow for public comment on its final recommendations.

The L&I must conduct an outreach program to educate employers and electrical trainees about the changes to the requirements for journey level electrician certification and offer technical assistance to employers and training agents to increase apprenticeship capacity for interested electrical trainees to meet the new requirements.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available. New fiscal note requested on February 21, 2022.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed, except section 1, relating to eligibility for journey level electrician certificate of competency exams, which takes effect July 1, 2023.