Washington State Department of Labor & Industries

Electrical Currents

Newsletter from the Office of the Chief Electrical Inspector

Stephen Thornton, Chief Electrical Inspector **Vol. 18 No. 3** **March 2015**

Question of the Month – How many voting members comprise the Washington State ***Electrical Board***? *– See the correct answer on Page 2.*

Note From the Chief

I am happy to announce that the Electrical Program has recently restored three more electrical inspector positions. We are closely monitoring electrical program revenue to determine whether the program can support restoration of additional inspectors, which were allotted by the legislature last session to deliver better service to our customers. This brings the total number of positions restored in the last eighteen months to twenty-one (nineteen electrical inspectors, one E-CORE inspector, and one technical specialist/trainer). All of these new positions as well as the Electrical Succession Planning Inspectors attend and complete our new inspector training before going to the field to do inspections on their own. This training program consists of an eight-week process, which includes a rotating schedule of one week of training followed by one week in the field to use the tools and information that they were given during the training. During the program, they receive training on basic safety practices, inspection techniques, mobile computing, permitting, and permit fees along with ECORE training and the opportunity to ride along with experienced inspectors. We are finding that this training program gets our new inspectors up to speed and productive quickly, and with better knowledge of the inspection process. By hiring and training inspectors in the winter months, we hope to have a better-prepared work force ready for the upcoming summer and fall months to provide better service to our customers.

Safety Tip of the Month

Protect Extension Cords from Damage.

- Do not run extension cords under carpets, through doorways or under furniture.
- Only use an extension cord outdoors if it is marked for outdoor use.
- Never alter a cord to change its length or perform inadequate repairs such as taping up damaged insulation. Do not trim, cut or alter the plug blades in any way.
- Unplug an extension cord when it is not in use. The cord is energized when it is plugged in and can overheat if shorted.

Legislative Update

If you are a part of the electrical or telecommunications sectors regulated by L&I, lawmakers are considering several bills this legislative session that may affect you. Last month's edition (***February 2015***) of the newsletter contained a list of the bills that may affect the electrical program. None of this legislation is sponsored by L&I. Take this opportunity to review the bills and comment if you desire. A comment button is located to the right of the bill number on the webpage for each bill.

You may also contact your legislator to share your opinion about any legislation by visiting the legislative website at: ***http://www.leg.wa.gov/LIC/Pages/hotline.aspx***.

Electrical Board Opportunity

There will be an opening on the Electrical Board in July to fill one of the certified electrician seats. The electrical board meets four times per year and plays a vital role in advising the department on all matters concerning Washington's electrical laws, rules, and policies. Anyone interested in applying for this position must hold a current Washington electrical certificate of competency. You can submit an application using the ***form*** on the Governor's website. Application must be made using the Governor's form. Send your resume and any additional information you would like considered, such as letters of recommendation in a separate email to the Boards and Commissions mailbox at: ***GovernorBoardsandCommissions@gov.wa.gov***. If you have questions about the positions or the Electrical Board, contact Bethany Rivera at 360-902-5249.

Tamper-Resistant Receptacle Requirements for Child Care Facilities

A new requirement in the 2011 NEC® requires all nonlocking-type 125-volt, 15- and 20-ampere receptacles installed in child care facilities to be listed tamper-resistant receptacles. The section was re-arranged in 2014 NEC® 406.12(C), and four exceptions were added, but the basic rule is the same. The term "Child Care Facility" is defined in 406.2. According to this definition, a child care facility is a building or structure, or portion thereof, for educational, supervisory, or personal care service for more than four children 7 years old or less. This definition includes such facilities as day-care centers, pre-schools and elementary schools, church Sunday school classrooms, etc.

For the purpose of this requirement, all areas within these facilities that are accessible to children 7 years old or less will require tamper-resistant receptacles when receptacles are replaced, or when new receptacle outlets are installed.

When Do I Need to Request an Inspection?

Recently, questions have been asked about when a permit holder is required to request an inspection. Specifically, when is an installation considered "complete"? ***WAC 296-46B-901***(9)(a) requires a request for inspection to be made no later than three business days after completion of the installation or one business day after any part of the installation has been energized, whichever occurs first. As required by WAC 296-46B-901(3) each entity performing electrical work must obtain a permit and request inspections for the portion of electrical work performed by that entity. Some jobs may have multiple permit holders. If your permit is taken out for a portion of the job, you must request inspections based upon the portion of the installation covered by your permit even though there may be other electrical work performed by others that is not complete. For example, your portion of a job may be only to install raceway for a future system to be installed by others. You must request an inspection within three days of completing the installation of the raceway as described on your permit, even though nothing has been energized yet, and there will be more work performed by others on the job. On jobs with multiple permits, please notify the inspector that there will be other work at that location. This is best done by entering this information in the comment field of your inspection request. The inspector may choose to combine inspections for multiple permits on the same inspection trip, but permit holders are responsible for requesting inspections in a timely manner as described above.

You may call any L&I office to request an inspection, but this may delay your inspection request. Requests made online before midnight will be available to the inspector the next morning. To request an electrical inspection online, go to ***http://www.lni.wa.gov/TradesLicensing/Electrical/FeePermInsp/PermitInspect/Inspection.asp***

Because of fluctuating workloads, the response time for an inspection may vary. Inspectors perform most inspections within one or two working days after they receive the request. In some areas, longer delays are possible because of the large geographical area covered by the inspector or short staffing.

Answer to Question of the Month: 14 – The electrical board is appointed by the governor. Membership and duties are described in ***RCW 19.28.311***. The board is made up of a diverse group of stakeholders representing all phases of Washington's electrical industry. Membership consists of one representative of a private or public power company, one telecommunications service provider, three licensed electrical contractors, one licensed telecommunications contractor, one electrical manufacturer/distributor representative, one general public representative, three certified electricians, one telecommunications worker, one licensed professional engineer, one outside line worker, and one non-voting member to represent city electrical inspection jurisdictions. The chief electrical inspector serves as the secretary to the board, but like the city AHJ, is not a voting member.

Ugly Picture: Click on the picture to open a larger image. A worker who said his battery drill was dead and "This was the fastest way to get power" installed this temporary receptacle. The worker was kneeling on wet concrete with his feet in the snow as he drilled holes. When asked if he knew if the GFCI even worked, he said, "I don't know." Don't be like this guy.