



ELECTRICAL CURRENTS

Newsletter from the Office of the Chief Electrical Inspector

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● We Are Recognized As An Electrically Safe State

Mike Holt a well known trainer and member of the NFPA code making panel(s) has compiled an analysis conducted by his firm which rates and assigns a safety grade to each of the 50 states. Washington did very well when compared to other states. In fact, only three states scored higher. This is an indication that we are doing things right. So why is it that we've distinguished ourselves from the rest of the country?

Clearly, the citizens of the state of Washington have placed a priority on safety for electrical equipment and installations. This is best accomplished through a highly skilled team of licensed electrical contractors using certified electricians and trainees who install their electrical work to established and well-defined standards. Verification is done with electrical safety inspections by competent city and state inspectors enforcing these adopted safety standards. As the largest "authority having jurisdiction" in Washington L&I has been a major contributor toward this distinction:

- We have comprehensive coverage across Washington with 22 field offices from Port Angeles to Pullman. Our offices are staffed by customer service and inspection teams that know how to find solutions for our customers.
- Our highly experienced inspection workforce is in the field every day responding to requests for inspection of permitted electrical work responding within 24 hours for 90% of inspections requested. Our primary focus is to ensure public safety. Our inspectors are given the latitude to use their knowledge and experience to make situational judgments about electrical safety risks when inspecting. Our highly specialized Electrical Compliance Outreach Regulation and Education (E-CORE) team along with the electrical field inspectors, continually work to find and expose the illegal activities of the underground economy.
- Customers, stakeholders, and inspectors are supported by our Specialty Compliance Services electrical staff at our Tumwater headquarters, which include the Equipment Evaluations & Continuing Education, Licensing & Certification, and Audit & Citations teams. We process tens of thousands of applications and files each year for licenses, certificates, classes, and laboratory approvals. The Chief Electrical inspector, supported by technical and administrative specialists, is responsible for the electrical program's technical and enforcement policy, leadership, and quality assurance.

● The Previously Evaluated Equipment List Is Available On Our Website

A list of Industrial utilization equipment previously reviewed and approved by an accredited engineer has been compiled and is maintained by the department on our electrical Web site under the link to "Installation Information". See WAC 296-46B-903 for a description of the type of industrial utilization equipment eligible for engineering evaluation.

The department does not regulate the pricing for engineering evaluation services. The customer generally sees a significant reduction in costs for their engineer equipment evaluation when an approved engineer has previously evaluated and labeled the same model of equipment in Washington. The secondary evaluation is made to ensure the equipment is the same (identical) equipment and it has not been altered, modified or damaged.

If you are considering purchasing equipment to perform a specific manufacturing task or process (e.g. milling machine, wine making equipment, bottling or packaging equipment, etc.) you may find it on the list. If your customer has specialized manufacturing equipment that is likely to qualify for engineering evaluation, you should check the "Reviewed and Approved Industrial Utilization Equipment List" first. It could save your customer money. The list can be found at:

<http://www.lni.wa.gov/TradesLicensing/Electrical/Install/ProdEngineer/default.asp>

Safety Tip of the Month!

When installing or using listed or labeled equipment it is important to always follow the manufacturer's instructions. This is particularly true when choosing a light bulb for the light fixture in your home. Not only can an over-sized bulb shorten the life span of the light fixture, it can build up excessive heat which can lead to equipment failure or even fire.

● Expired Electrical Permits That Have Had No Inspection Request

It is important to make certain your work is inspected. To fulfill our mandate of Keeping Washington Safe, we ensure that all appropriate inspections are made. An inspection request must be made when: within three business days of fully completing the job or within one business day after energizing any work (see WAC 296-46B-900(10)(a)). Progress inspections may also be requested for: cover, service, etc.

We have been finding many expired permits where an inspection request has never been made. The permit purchaser has the responsibility of ensuring the work is properly completed and that an inspection request is made. Failing to request the inspection puts the permit purchaser and consumers at risk. We have been working to ensure that all inspections are requested and made.

If the permit purchaser has let the permit expire without the appropriate inspection, a new permit must be purchased and an inspection requested. In addition, the permit purchaser is likely to receive an electrical citation(s) for failing to request the inspection. Be proactive and avoid these problems by verifying the inspection status of your permits before compliance action is necessary. Most permits need at least a progress inspection shortly after the permit is purchased. It is the permit purchaser's obligation to ensure inspections are requested.

Inspection history and information is available for every permit by clicking on the "Permit, Fees, and Inspection" button on the Electrical Program website's homepage:

<http://www.lni.wa.gov/tradeslicensing/electrical/>.

● Appeals Of Non-Compliance Citations

RCW 19.28.131 states that any penalty is subject to review by appeal to the Electrical Board. Be absolutely sure that you have not violated the intent of the electrical law or rules before initiating an appeal. Many times appellants just want their day in court, to be able to tell their side of the story. This may be an expensive undertaking, since very few citation appeals are actually won by the appellant (i.e. less than 1% of all appeals).

The Electrical Board assigns the initial appeal hearing to an Administrative Law Judge (ALJ). The appellant, their attorney (if they choose to have one) and any witnesses will need to appear at the hearing. The ALJ will only rule on whether citations were properly issued under the electrical law (RCW 19.28) and rules (WAC 296-46B). There is no consideration of penalty amounts, prior history, extenuating circumstances, or electrical technical issues. A citation appeal hearing is not like municipal traffic court where the judge may have the ability to reduce a fine.

A \$200 appeal bond must accompany all appeals. An appeal is considered to be for each entity that received a citation, for each type of violation. For instance, if XYZ Electric receives 3 citations for failing to buy a permit and wants to appeal, the appeal bond would be \$200. If a citation was also issued for failing to call an inspection, the total appeal bond, for all 4 citations would be \$400. If the appeal is lost the bond is forfeited to offset the hearing costs and the full penalty amount of the violation must be paid. The bond is not subtracted from the penalty amount. If you win the appeal, the bond is returned and the citations are voided.

● Circuit Extensions Allowed By Class B Permits

120V, 20A circuits are allowed to be extended as long as the contractor's scope allows them to do so. You must remember that a contractor may use no more than two class B labels per week on any individual jobsite (i.e. address).

● Electrical Question of the Month

This Month's Question: Conductor fill including splices cannot exceed ___ of the area within a surface non-metallic raceway where the cover is accessible and capable of being opened in place after installation. **A) 53%, B) 60%, C) 75%, D) splices not allowed**

Last Month's Question: A utility interactive inverter must mechanically disconnect the connected secondary power source when the primary power source becomes de-energized? **A) True, or B) False**
The answer is: **B) False** [NEC 705.40 Exception].