



## ● This Month's Question of the Month

The maximum voltage that is allowed in a dwelling unit is **A)** 120 volts between conductors **B)** 250 volts nominal **C)** 277 volts to ground **D)** 600 system volts. *See the correct answer on page 2.*

## ● Electrical Board Recruitment – General Public Seat

There will be a vacancy on the Electrical Board in July. Dave Jacobson has served in the General Public Seat on the board for ten years. He has been appointed to the Chairmanship of the Pierce County Citizen's Advisory Board and elected as a Pierce County Parks and Recreation Commissioner. Dave's new duties preclude him from reapplying for the Electrical Board at the end of his term. Thanks Dave for all your hard work and dedication to the electrical and telecommunications industry.

Anyone interested in applying for the General Public Seat can get an application form on the Governor's website at: <http://www.governor.wa.gov/boards/application/default.asp>. Application must be made using the Governor's form. Send your resume and any additional information you would like considered in a separate e-mail to the Boards and Commissions mailbox at [GovernorGregoireBoardsandCommissions@gov.wa.gov](mailto:GovernorGregoireBoardsandCommissions@gov.wa.gov). Recommendation letters should be sent to the Governor's office. If you have questions about the position or the Electrical Board, contact: Crystal Forsberg at (360) 902-5249.

## ● Continuing Education Instructors Do Not Represent L&I Or Any Other AHJ

The Electrical Program approves hundreds of electrical education courses and instructors each year; however, they do not represent L&I, the Electrical Program, or any Authority Having Jurisdiction (AHJ). The program reviews each course's basic curriculum and process and the minimum credentials for instructors.

Instructors, even those who may be or have been inspectors, only represent the training class sponsor. They do not represent L&I or any other AHJ. As with any class or book, attendees must be aware that for an official interpretation of any code, rule, or policy, they must ask the AHJ directly. Interpretations by class instructors or authors may or may not be correct. If you make an improper installation or violate a permitting, licensing, or certification law, you will be accountable, even if you believe your instructor provided you with a correct interpretation.

Many instructors have a disclaimer in their presentation – that they do not represent any AHJ. However, some do not clearly say that they only represent themselves and the course provider. If you have any doubt about what the official interpretation will be, ask questions of the AHJ.

## ● Equipment Approval Options For Industrial Equipment

Electrical contractors are still confused regarding the allowed types of approval for equipment. There are two basic categories of equipment:

- Industrial control panels and industrial utilization equipment as defined in WAC 296-46B-903(5) – This equipment may be listed or field evaluated by an approved electrical testing laboratory or reviewed/approved by an approved electrical engineer.
- All other equipment – This equipment may be listed or field evaluated by an approved electrical testing laboratory
- Normal L&I inspection – If the electrical system of the equipment is comprised of listed components installed in conformance with the NEC and WAC. Additional fees may be required for inspection time.

If a field evaluation or engineer review is used to gain equipment acceptance, the laboratory or engineer must request approval from L&I's Chief Electrical Inspector before the review is begun. Equipment not accepted by the Authority Having Jurisdiction (AHJ) should not be operated without AHJ approval.

### Safety Tip of the Month!

Avoid head on motor vehicle collisions by keeping your wheels straight when waiting to make a left turn.

If your wheels are turned left and your vehicle is struck from behind by another vehicle, you may be pushed into oncoming traffic.

## ● Generator Fees

L&I has found contractors and owners attempting to use the incorrect fee schedules when buying permits. The fee schedule for generators is found in WAC 296-46B-906(5)(g). Remember that, for electrical permit fees, wind turbine, photovoltaic systems, and fuel cell systems are also considered to be generators. Remember that the initial permit fee must cover all trips. A trip is equal to one inspection or 30 minutes of inspection time per inspection, whichever is less. The permit fee must be at least \$76.40 to qualify for two trips.

The fee for a portable generator is currently \$70.30. For permanently installed generators you must use the appropriate residential or commercial new/altered service or feeder section, not the section for new residential construction.

Do not assume that the fee for a generator is included in the square foot permit cost for a new residence. Generators are a separate fee line item. For residential generators, use WAC 296-46B-906(1)(b) for new generators or 906(1)(c) for altered generator feeders.

- For a new generator, 200 amperes or less, with no other work, the fee is currently \$82.70. If another feeder or service is involved, the initial fee is \$24.60 (WAC 296-46B-906(1)(b)).
- For an existing generator system work (e.g. replacement of generator, transfer switch, generator system wiring, etc.), 200 amperes or less, the initial fee is currently \$70.30 (WAC 296-46B-906(1)(c)).

For commercial generators, use WAC 296-46B-906(2)(a) for new generators or 906(2)(b) for altered generator feeders.

## ● Passive Testing Is OK Without A Contractor's License

Passive testing of electrical systems does not require electrical contractor licensing, electrician certification, or permitting and inspection. Passive, means that the tester does not interfere, in any way, with the electrical system (e.g. does not: un-terminate/terminate any wiring, device, or other equipment). The tester may use electrical instruments to perform tests of the electrical system or change adjustable setting of timers, relays, or other adjustments that can be made without un-terminating/terminating. An example of passive testing is when a fire alarm system is given an operational test by an owner, owner's representative, or fire official.

## ● Note From The Chief

As you know, the Electrical Program experienced a second round of layoffs March 31<sup>st</sup>. Because of the continuing sluggish construction economy, we were forced to lose thirteen valuable members of our inspection staff. Permit revenue has fallen by 24% since 2007. Since last year, we have had to lay off 59 inspectors and support staff – about one-third of our total workforce. Because of the most recent layoff, contractors may need to build in longer inspection wait times into their construction schedules.

Because of the layoffs, the number of inspections each inspector must complete has risen. There will be times when the inspector will be able to complete the inspection in the 24-hour timeframe, such as when a site is geographically close to another needing an inspection, or in emergency situations; but our goal is centered on a 48-hour inspection response. We know how time-sensitive building schedules are, so we are hoping builders will plan for longer wait times.

Yet, through this transition, much will remain unchanged – we must stay relentlessly focused on delivering excellent electrical inspections and upon having a strong compliance presence. We will continue to maintain rapid responses to inspection requests and vigilance with the underground economy and contractors who attempt to operate with inappropriate competitive advantages (not buying permits, working unsupervised trainees, etc.). While we focus on our mission, we will also be looking for innovative ways to be even more efficient and effective than we have been in the past. This will not be easy; but, I am confident that we can find great opportunity for the Electrical Program in the challenges ahead. I hope all of you are as well. Our mission has been “We Keep Washington Safe.” That will not change.

## ● Answer to This Month's Question of the Month:

D) 600 system volts (see NEC 690.7(C))