



● **This Month's Question of the Month** – No transformer may be installed in a location where dust with _____ characteristics may be present. – See the correct answer on page 2.

● **Note From The Chief – Amnesty Offer**

We continue to see a significant number of permits purchased and the work completed or energized with no inspection request. Electrical permits expire 12 months after the purchase date if there is no inspection request. Refunds are not available for an expired electrical permit. If electrical work was performed and the permit expired without an inspection request, a new permit must be purchased and an inspection request made.

3,000 permits purchased from January 1, 2009, through December 31, 2010, were not requested for inspection and have expired. 3,800 additional permits purchased from January 1, 2010, through August 31, 2011, have had no inspection request. Permit holders are required by WAC 296-46B-901(10)(a) to make inspection requests within:

- 3 business days after completing the installation; or
- 1 business day after energizing circuits or equipment, whichever comes first.

In an effort to ensure safe electrical installations were made on these permits, I am offering amnesty from any compliance action for any electrical contractor that purchased an electrical permit:

- Since January 1, 2009, and is expired, and failed to request an inspection of the electrical work on that expired permit. To qualify for the amnesty, the contractor must:
 - Obtain a new permit and request inspection for the work before February 15, 2012, and
 - Ensure the local supervisor is aware that the new permit is replacing an expired permit when making the request for inspection on the new permit. Do this by entering "Replaces expired permit # _____" as well as a description of the work in the Description of Work field when obtaining the new permit and again in the Comments field when making the inspection request online.
- Since January 1, 2010, for active permits where the holder failed to request an inspection of the electrical work on that permit within 3 business days after completing the installation or within 1 business day after energizing circuits or equipment, whichever comes first. To qualify for the amnesty, the contractor must request the inspection before February 15, 2012.

On a monthly basis beginning in February 2012, we will:

- Send out a "no inspection request" warning letter approximately 90 days after a permit purchase where there has been no inspection request made.
- Review our records to find expired permits without an inspection request.
- The department will take compliance action on all identified permits with inspection request violations.

Use this amnesty opportunity to clean up your expired permits without inspections, avoid penalties, and ensure an electrically safe installation was completed for your customers. You can view your permit history and identify any permits without an inspection request by logging into your Secure Access Washington (SAW) internet account. If you have any questions about how to review your permits, call Elissa Zyski at (360) 902-5906 or Phyllis Cooper at (360) 902-5293.

● **WAC Rule Update**

The department has filed a CR101 notice of intent to begin rule making for WAC 296-46B. I will publish a special edition *Electrical Currents* newsletter in March. It will contain complete information about the rulemaking timeline, Technical Advisory Committee, proposals, etc. Do not put your name in for the TAC prior to reading the special edition. Governor Gregoire has extended the moratorium on new rule making for rules considered non-critical. Rule making proposals will be considered non-critical unless:

- Required by law or court order;
- Necessary to manage budget shortfalls or maintain fund solvency;

Safety Tip of the Month!

Never pull a cable to release a plug from the wall. It might take longer to cross the room, but stay safe by ensuring that you hold the plug, not just the cable, as you pull it out of the wall.

- Necessary to protect public health, safety, and welfare;
- Beneficial to or requested by and supported by the regulated entities or small businesses that it affects; or
- Necessary to respond to current economic conditions or assist in long-term recovery, to include employment assistance, consumer protection, or government reform.

● Electrical Board Vacancies – Applications Due Before March 1, 2012.

Do not forget to make application for the currently and upcoming vacant Electrical Board positions. This is a great opportunity for you to be a voice for your industry. For more information, see the December 2011, *Electrical Currents* at <http://www.lni.wa.gov/TradesLicensing/Electrical/files/currents/elc1112.pdf>.

● When The General Contractor Doesn't Completely Finish The Walls

It is common today for the general contractor to leave unfinished spaces for the owner to complete after moving in. L&I electrical inspectors will not provide a fully completed final approval when this occurs. If the wiring is code compliant, complete, and all devices are in place, the inspector will mark the final inspection "approved partial" and will enter a comment that specific spaces are unfinished. If a final "approved complete" notice is needed by the owner after the finish is completed – drywall, etc.:

- The original electrical contractor must pay a progress inspection fee on the original permit and request a final inspection; or
- The owner may obtain a safety inspection permit and request the inspection.

When spaces are left unfinished, wiring is left exposed before the final finish material is installed. Ground and arc fault protection devices will only be required as necessary to protect the circuits as intended after the installation of the final finish. In spaces intended for occupancy (i.e. not garages, shops, and similar spaces) that will be later finished, exposed wiring will not be required to have physical protection beyond what is required for a rough-in inspection where the space will be finished later (e.g. no running boards, etc.), but final inspection approval will not be given. Physical protection will be required for garages, shops, and similar spaces.

● Focused Compliance

L&I inspectors are focusing their compliance efforts on the underground economy and contractors who fail to obtain electrical permits and inspection in an attempt to gain a competitive advantage over other contractors. By focusing our compliance efforts on unlicensed electrical contractors, uncertified electricians, and anyone who does not obtain an electrical permit and inspection, we will address our customers' expectations regarding compliance enforcement in the underground economy and helping maintain a level competitive playing field.

You must be a licensed electrical contractor if you advertise, bid, or are otherwise in the business of installing, repairing, or maintaining electrical wiring or equipment. Being a certified electrician does not allow a person to be an electrical contractor. Penalties for a violation of the electrical contractor law begin at \$500. For more information on becoming a licensed electrical contractor, go to:

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

Electrical contractors should routinely check that their electricians' and trainees' electrical certificates are active and valid for the scope of work they are doing.

If you do not get an electrical permit and electrical inspection for your work, you place your customers and the public at risk and are competing unfairly.

● Ugly Installations

Violations: NEC 110.3(B) – improper equipment ground crimp, NEC 300.15 – splice without a box, WAC 296-46B-990(3)(h) – serious noncompliant installation

● Answer to This Month's Question of the Month: hazardous – 2008 NEC 502.100(3)

