



Before Electrical Sign Work Begins

What electrical sign contractors and electricians should know

Electrical sign contractors and electricians

Before you do any sign work, please consider this:

- You must only do the work allowed in your (04) Sign specialty.
- An electrical permit must be purchased by the person, company or organization doing the work. Only property owners or electrical contractors can purchase an electrical permit.
- You must buy the permit for any work you are doing.
- A permit, inspection and approval will ensure that the work done on your property conforms to current safety codes.
- You are responsible for understanding all the electrical laws and rules. Laws and rules are available at www.ElectricalProgram.Lni.wa.gov.

Work that is allowed under (04) Sign scope of work

- Placement and connection of signs and outline lighting including the electrical supply, related telecommunications, controls and associated circuit extensions needed to power the sign.
- The installation of a maximum 60 ampere, 120/240 volt, single phase service used only to power the sign or outline lighting.
- Service, maintain or repair existing exterior luminaires that are mounted on a pole or other exterior structure with like-in-kind components. Remember, an electric sign is not a luminaire.

Work that is not allowed

- The installation of any new or replacement luminaire, even if it is mounted on a pole or other exterior structure. Remember, an electric sign is not a luminaire.

Sign work that requires contractor licensing and electrician certification

Installing, modifying or maintaining:

- Sign
- Sign-supporting pole
- Sign face
- Sign ballast
- Lamp socket or holder
- Sign disconnect switch
- Any work included in the allowed scope of work for (04) Signs, or
- Any other part of a listed electric sign or outline lighting

Work that doesn't require contractor licensing and electrician certification

- Cleaning the non-electrical parts of a sign.
- Forming or pouring a concrete pole base used to support a sign.
- Operating machinery used to assist an electrician in mounting an electric sign or supporting pole.
- Assembling the structural parts of a billboard.



Requirements for subcontracting

Electrical contractors can subcontract only to other electrical contractors. If the electrical contractor needs to perform or subcontract the work of any other non-electrical trade, the electrical contractor must also be a registered general contractor who meets the requirements of RCW 18.27, online at www.Contractors.Lni.wa.gov.

Permit Requirements

An electrical permit is required for most new, remodel, and maintenance electrical work:

- Your best protection is purchasing electrical permits and having your electrical work inspected, as required by law.
- You could be subject to civil penalties if you do not obtain the required permits.
- You could face a fine of up to \$2,000 for failing to obtain a permit before beginning electrical work. Each day and each location on which a violation occurs constitutes a separate violation.
- There could be additional penalties for failing to correct violations found during an electrical inspection.
- Your electrical power might be disconnected if you fail to comply with the law.

Sign work that requires a permit

- All circuit wiring
- Motors larger than 10 H.P.
- Thermostats
- Thermostat wiring
- Telecommunications systems
- Other electrical equipment

Sign work that does not require a permit

- Like-in-kind replacement of circuit breakers, fuses, lamps, snap switches, receptacle outlets, heating elements, light fixture ballasts, motors 10 H.P. or smaller.
- Like-in-kind replacement of thermostats (not the wiring), contactors, relays, timers, motor starters, and similar control components.

Electrical permits and inspections

You may buy your permit online using a credit card at www.ElectricalPermitsInspections.Lni.wa.gov or in person at any L&I office.

Class B permit labels

Some sign work may be done using a Class B permit label. If you are not familiar with Class B labels, you should review WAC 296-46B-900. You must **follow all the rules** for using Class B labels.

Installation description and fees

- Include a complete description of all the work that is being performed under the permit.
- The initial inspection fee will be based on your installation description.
- The electrical inspector will adjust the fee if the information you provide is incomplete or inaccurate.

Driving directions

To ensure a prompt inspection and to avoid additional trip fees, you must provide good driving directions from the nearest major intersection. If you believe the inspector may have difficulty locating your work site, please provide a contact name and telephone number when buying the permit or requesting the inspection.

Making your inspection request

- Request an electrical inspection online at www.ElectricalPermitsInspections.Lni.wa.gov. Requests made online before midnight will be available to the inspector the next morning. Because of varying workloads, the response time for an inspection may vary. Most inspections are performed within one working day after the request is received.
- You may also call any L&I office to request an inspection, but this may delay your inspection request.
- If any special arrangements are needed, you must contact your inspector between 8 and 8:30 a.m. prior to the inspection. Special arrangements include access to the site when no one is present, request for specific inspection days or times, or any other needed arrangements.
- Inspectors will not enter any work site when minors are present unless the owner or the owner's adult representative is present.

Canceling an inspection

Contact your inspector before 8:30 a.m. the day of the inspection to cancel an inspection request. Cancellations made after 8:30 a.m. may not reach the inspector in time and may result in additional fees.

Your responsibilities

- You must either do the work yourself or hire a licensed electrical contractor to do it.
- You must provide clear and safe access to the inspection site or the inspection will not be made. If necessary, you must provide safe access by way of steps, stairs, bucket truck or ladder to the inspection site. Additional fees may be charged for additional trips.
- The **site must be free from any hazards** to the electrical inspector. Inspectors will not enter an unsafe work site. Additional fees may be charged for additional trips.

No electrical work may be covered before it is inspected and approved.

Principles that guide state electrical inspections

- **Public safety:** To protect the general public from unsafe living and working conditions.
- **Fire safety:** Improperly installed components, including electrical, are a leading cause of fires in the state.
- **Consumer protection:** Improperly installed electrical work can be costly to a property owner.

State authority regarding electrical inspection

The Department of Labor & Industries' Electrical Program has statewide responsibility for inspecting both new and altered electrical systems in all types of installations. With this responsibility, L&I's goal is to provide consistency and uniformity in application of laws and rules concerning electrical installations.

Note: Some cities do electrical inspections. Their standards of inspection must meet or exceed those required by L&I. If you have city inspections, contact your city for answers to your electrical questions.

For more information

 **On the Web:** L&I's Electrical Program
www.ElectricalProgram.Lni.wa.gov

L&I Offices: www.Offices.Lni.wa.gov

Other formats for persons with disabilities are available on request. Call 1-800-547-8367. TDD users, call 360-902-5797. L&I is an equal opportunity employer.