

Stephen Thornton, Chief Electrical Inspector

Vol. 23 No. 5

May 2020

Question of the Month – What is the best method to communicate important details about an inspection request to your electrical inspector? A) Leave details in the comment field of an online inspection request. B) Email the inspector. C) Leave a voicemail message at the inspector’s desk phone. D) Call the inspector the morning of the inspection. *See correct answer on Page 2.*

COVID-19 Electrical Program Updates

L&I Office Closures – L&I regional offices remain closed to public visits until further notice. Most of our services are available online. A great way to find what you want is to search your browser (e.g., “L&I renew electrical certificate” or “L&I purchase electrical permit”). Local L&I offices can help you by phone from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. weekdays (except state holidays). Please call your closest [regional office](#), or you can call the Office of Information and Assistance at 360-902-5800.

Electrical Inspections – L&I is following the Governor’s Directives Regarding Construction – We are performing electrical inspections in accordance with the Governor’s April 24 [Phase 1 Construction Restart COVID-19 Job Site Requirements](#). On April 29, the Governor issued additional guidance clarifying what [Authorized Construction](#) includes. For the latest updates from the Governor’s office visit <https://coronavirus.wa.gov/>.

Due to the previous restrictions on construction activity, there is a large backlog of inspection requests. Inspectors will be prioritizing their inspections and trying their best to catch up. If you have an urgent request, please indicate that in the comments section of the inspection request. Another option is to request a [Virtual Electrical Inspection](#) (VEI) on the same day at least 30 minutes in advance of when you need it. To use VEI, you will need to download the [Skype Application](#) and create a profile. Use VEI for any electrical inspections that will take no longer than 15 minutes, *and* that do not involve service or final approvals. On the jobsite, make sure you have at least a 4G, LTE, or Wi-Fi connection on your mobile device. Use Google Chrome to [schedule](#) your inspection for the day and time you want. You can learn more about VEI by visiting www.lni.wa.gov and search “Virtual.”

Renewing a Training Certificate – On March 13, Governor Inslee issued a proclamation prohibiting all public and private universities, colleges, technical schools, apprenticeship programs, and similar schools and programs from conducting in-person classes in all counties of Washington State. Because of this, holders of training certificates with expiration dates on or after March 13 may not be able to complete the basic classroom instruction required to renew their certificates.

The department will allow those trainees who renew their certificates without completing the required classroom instruction to continue working with their certificate in inactive status until 60 days following the allowance by the Governor’s office to resume in-class instruction. This will allow them to complete their required classroom instruction when classes resume. This allowance will apply only to holders of training certificates with expiration dates on or after March 13, 2020 who have renewed and are in inactive (“T”) status due to lack of basic classroom instruction. It does not apply to holders of training certificates in expired, archived, or suspended status. It does not apply to holders

Safety Tip of the Month

Keep an eye out for the safety of your trainees and apprentices. Do not assume a person who is learning the electrical construction trade is familiar with basic electrical safety rules. Trainees and apprentices are eager to please their employers, and it is the electrical contractor’s responsibility to ensure they do not put themselves or others in danger.

of electrician, administrator, or master electrician certificates, as online classes are available for continuing education.

Training certificate holders must renew their certificates by paying the usual renewal fee. You can do this online. Follow instructions on the renewal notice or visit the [Electrical Trainee](#) page of our website. All other requirements remain in effect such as submitting affidavits of experience, supervision, and visible display of certificates. Electrical contractors and administrators will not be penalized for employing trainees who are inactive in accordance with the above.

Citation Appeals – 20 Day Appeal Window Requirement Revised – On March 23, Governor Inslee issued a [Stay Home - Stay Healthy](#) Proclamation 20-25 prohibiting all commercial activities in all counties of Washington State, except for specific limited activities identified on the essential services list. Companies and individuals issued electrical “Important Notice: A citation has been issued...” letter(s) or a license/certificate renewal denial letter requiring a response to the Department within a 20 day window may not have the ability to timely respond. Because of this, Department mail containing electrical “Important Notice: A citation has been issued...” letter(s) or license/certificate renewal denial letter sent after March 1, 2020 will have the 20-day response window extended to a maximum of 20 days beyond the date the stay home order is rescinded. All responses must meet all other requirements of law and rule.

Remaining Stakeholder Meetings to be Re-Scheduled – In order to comply with the Governor’s emergency proclamation restricting the size of gatherings due to the coronavirus (COVID-19), we are cancelling all remaining stakeholder meetings. We will re-schedule these for a later date. Watch for announcements in this newsletter and on the [Electrical Calendar](#) page of our website.

Possible Delay of Effective Date of 2020 NEC and 2020 WAC 296-46B – The rule revisions mentioned below are on schedule and are set to be adopted as described, but due to the effects of COVID19 on Washington businesses and consumers, the department is considering a delay in the effective date of the revised rules and 2020 NEC. Watch for more details on the [Electrical Laws and Rules](#) webpage and in the June edition of this newsletter.

WAC 296-46B Rulemaking Update

You can find details and rulemaking documents by visiting the Rule Development section of our [Electrical Laws and Rules](#) webpage. The proposed adoption date for the new rules is May 19, 2020 and the proposed effective date is July 1, 2020 unless extended by the department as mentioned above.

For complete details about the process, see the [October 2019 Electrical Currents](#) Newsletter Special Edition. If you need additional information or have any questions about the rulemaking process, you may contact Alicia Curry at 360-902-6244 or Alicia.Curry@lni.wa.gov.

Legislative Update

One bill affecting the electrical program this session has passed the legislature and was signed by the Governor. [Senate Bill 6409](#) – Exempts manufacturers’ authorized engineers or factory-trained service technicians from electrical contractor licensing and worker certification requirements while working within the confines of industrial equipment. This bill becomes effective June 11, 2020.

Answer to Question of the Month: A) Leave details in the (255-character) comment field of an [online inspection request](#). The inspector that takes the inspection job will read the comment and have the information to get the inspection done. Many times, inspectors start their day from the field and download inspection requests remotely. Phone calls require valuable time that reduces their ability to complete more inspections. Help us help you by making inspection arrangements in a way that avoids asking inspectors to make unnecessary phone calls.

This document may contain hyperlinks to internet web pages. To access this PDF document online, go to:

<https://lni.wa.gov/licensing-permits/electrical/electrical-currents-newsletter/>

Electrical Section Internet Address: <https://www.lni.wa.gov/> - Select Licensing & Permits, then Electrical

This document is available in alternative formats to accommodate persons with disabilities. For assistance, call 1-800-547-8367.

(TDD/TTY users, please call 360-902-5797.) Labor & Industries is an Equal Opportunity employer.