

Question of the Month – When selecting overcurrent protection for conductors, at what overcurrent protective device ampacity rating is it not permitted to round up to the next higher standard rating? *See correct answer on Page 2.*

Adoption of 2020 NEC and WAC 296-46B Changes Delayed Until October 29, 2020

Due to the impact of COVID19 on businesses and consumers in Washington, we are issuing an emergency rule later this month to delay the effective date of the 2020 National Electrical Code (NEC) and the [recently adopted changes to WAC 296-46B](#). During their April meeting, the Electrical Board recommended that any delay follow a common sense approach similar to that used when the Governor delayed adoption of state building codes until November 1, 2020.

Electrical examinations will continue to be based on the 2017 NEC until further notice sometime next year.

Watch the Rule Development tab of our [Electrical Laws and Rules](#) web page and future editions of this newsletter for more information.

Temporary Allowance for Virtual Basic Trainee Classes

Due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on availability of basic classroom training for electrical trainees, approved classroom training providers may temporarily provide their classes through an internet-based instruction platform under the following conditions:

1. Trainees and instructors must continuously interact in real time by live audio and video during the entire period of instruction and by live video during competency examinations; and
2. Providers must:
 - a. Allow department oversight by sending an invitation to ElectricalProgram@lni.wa.gov for every internet trainee class. Invitations must include: a hyperlink and any password needed to join the class, L&I issued course approval number, class agenda (name of class and instructor, date of class, starting time, ending time, breaks, etc.); and
 - b. Limit class size to fifteen students or less; and
 - c. Verify student identity using government issued photo identification.

This temporary allowance will be in effect until normal classroom education can safely resume in consultation with the Electrical Board and industry stakeholders.

Trainees Working While in Inactive Status - Deadline Extended Until September 1, 2020

The COVID-19 pandemic has reduced availability of required classroom training for electrical trainees. Temporary measures are in place to increase availability of training during recovery. Until September 1, 2020, trainees having certificates that expired on or after March 13, 2020, who have paid a renewal fee to renew them into inactive (“T”) status, may continue working in the trade while completing their classroom training.

Providing an allowance to work while in inactive status until September 1, 2020 is not a holiday for inactive trainees to put off required training. If not completed by the deadline, inactive trainees cannot lawfully work in the electrical trade without a properly renewed (active) training certificate.

Safety Tip of the Month

- Practice excellent hygiene (wash your hands regularly)
- Use proper personal protective equipment
- Maintain personal space (6 ft.)
- Cover minor cuts
- Cover your cough and sneezes
- If you are feeling ill, stay home
- Maintain a positive attitude 😊

Trainees should not wait until the last minute to complete training! A list of [approved basic trainee classes](#) is available on our website at www.lni.wa.gov.

Affidavits: Trainees should submit affidavits of experience within 30 days of expiration of their training certificate to avoid a late fee. At the latest, trainees have 180 days after their certificate expires to submit affidavits for hours worked in the previous two years before expiration. Affidavits submitted beyond 180 days of expiration are untimely and not eligible for consideration. Avoid losing your hours by submitting them on time!

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 with 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 directives based on the restart phase of the county where the project is. Here are direct links to the various documents with guidance on permitted construction and job site safety requirements:

- [Phase 1 Construction Restart COVID-19 Job Site Requirements](#).
- [Implementation of Phase 1 Construction Restart - Addendum](#)
- [Phase 2 Construction COVID- 19 Job Site Requirements](#)

For the latest updates from the Governor’s office visit <https://coronavirus.wa.gov/>. Due to 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). 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 at least 30 minutes before you need it. You can learn more about VEI by visiting www.lni.wa.gov and search “Virtual.”

HVAC Replacements May Not Be Like-In-Kind or Class B Eligible

[WAC 296-46B-908](#) allows the Class B random inspection process for the like-in-kind replacement of an electric/gas/oil furnace not exceeding 240 volts and 100 amps, or an air conditioning unit, heat pump, or refrigeration unit not exceeding 240 volts, 40 minimum circuit amps. Like-in-kind is defined in [WAC 296-46B-100](#) as “...having the same overcurrent protection requirements...” as the unit being replaced. Often, a new replacement unit is more efficient and the maximum overcurrent protection specified on the nameplate of the new unit is lower than that of the existing circuit. In this case, the replacement is not like-in-kind and is not eligible for the Class B random inspection process.

The overcurrent protection device must be changed, and a regular permit and inspection is required. Replacement of a branch-circuit overcurrent device is not within the scope of the HVAC 06A or 06B specialty. This must be done by an 01 general, 02 residential (if on a residential site) or, when the [recent revisions to WAC 296-46B](#) becomes effective, an 07 nonresidential maintenance electrician.

Ugly Picture of the Month: *If viewing this document online, click on the picture to open a larger image.* An inspector found this junction box hidden in a ceiling. The effectiveness of the equipment grounding connections is questionable.

Answer to Question of the Month: 800 amperes. NEC 240.4(C) Where the rating of the overcurrent device is over 800 amperes, the ampacity of the conductors it protects shall be equal to or greater than the rating of the overcurrent device defined in 240.6.



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

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

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