

**Question of the Month** – The first person to correctly answer this question and show their math wins recognition in the next edition.

A design-build project on a new 9800 square foot bank building requires you to calculate the electrical load. L&I issued an electrical permit for this project on October 31, 2020. What is the general lighting and receptacle load when the actual number of general-purpose receptacle outlets is unknown? Allowances for buildings designed and constructed to comply with the Washington State Energy Code do not apply.

A) 12,740 VA B) 22,540 VA C) 34,300 VA D) 44,100 VA

See where to send your answer on Page 2

### Safety Tip of the Month

Soon the weather will improve and water sports and boating will return. Do not allow yourself or anyone else to swim near a dock or marina where electrical power is present. Unlike a properly wired swimming pool, marinas lack essential safeguards to protect swimmers from electric shock. If you must enter the water to work on a boat or dock, turn off and lock out all sources of electricity first.

### Ceiling Mounted Outlet Boxes in Dwellings – When are Fan Rated Boxes Required?

In the 2020 NEC, changes in 314.27(C) have created confusion. Knowing the meaning of, “in a location acceptable for the installation of a ceiling-suspended (paddle) fan” is essential to determining where boxes intended for fans are required.

We interpret the second paragraph of 314.27(C) to apply to all outlet boxes mounted in the ceilings of habitable rooms of dwelling occupancies except:

1. Areas within four feet of walls or soffits, or
2. Areas directly above permanently installed island or peninsular countertop surfaces.

When changing the application of a ceiling-mounted outlet box to support a paddle fan, strict adherence to 314.27(C) is required. Permits and inspections are required to install new ceiling suspended (paddle) fans.

### Trainees – 90 Day Temporary Allowance to Work While Expired

Without a doubt, social distancing requirements brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic affected availability of basic classroom training for trainees. Unprecedented conditions required unprecedented measures.

As it became apparent that no end to the pandemic was in sight, we provided more time for trainees to complete educational requirements as follows:

- 1) Trainees with expiration dates between March 13, 2020 and October 28, 2020 could work after renewing without completing educational requirements until January 26, 2021.
- 2) In the June 2020 edition of this [newsletter](#), we put in place a temporary allowance for virtual basic classroom classes to increase availability of trainee education.
- 3) Trainees expiring on or after October 29, 2020 may continue work after their certificate expires for 90 days. This allowance is temporary.

Watch for announcements about when these temporary allowances end in future editions of this newsletter.

## Legislative Update

One bill that affects the electrical program, [Substitute Senate Bill 5267](#) has passed the Legislature and is headed to the Governor's desk for signature. The bill requires those doing electrical work associated with flipping property to be certified electricians working for licensed electrical contractors. During consideration of this bill, electrical inspectors provided many examples of unsafe electrical wiring performed by property flippers that included stories of new owners having to hire electrical contractors to make repairs, sometimes at significant cost.

Generally, property owners are exempt from electrical licensing and certification laws in accordance with [RCW 19.28.261](#). This bill modifies that exemption for properties offered for sale within twelve months after obtaining it. This change aligns electrical laws with existing laws that require property flippers to be registered construction contractors or hire one to superintend any construction work.

You can get information about the bill by visiting [Substitute Senate Bill 5267](#) on the Washington legislature bill information web page.

## Rule Making Updates

**Increase Electrical Fees?** – Fees have remained unchanged for the last four years. To keep up with higher costs associated with inspection and licensing services, we are considering rule making to propose a fee increase equal to OFM's 5.79% [fiscal growth factor](#) projections.

A fee increase enables the program to continue providing quality and timely services to assure safe electrical installations and inspections in homes, businesses, industry, and institutions to protect people and property from electrical hazards.

We provided official public notification of this proposed rulemaking by filing a [CR-101](#) on February 16, 2021. Watch for more information about this rule making in the coming months. You can find more information about these and other rule making activities on the Rule Development tab of our [Electrical Laws, Rules, and Policies](#) web page.

**WAC 296-46B-995 Electrical Board – Appeal Rights and Hearings** - On December 1, 2020, L&I filed a CR-101 to begin the rule making process for amending [WAC 296-46B-995](#) in response to a petition for rule making. The petition seeks to clarify, simplify, and make the procedures for appeals to the board easier to understand and navigate, as well as to help reduce confusion for those that appeal decisions to the board.

**Ugly Picture of the Month:** Don't think electricity is hazardous? Think again. This explosion and fire occurred when a worker simply operated a circuit breaker in a dead-front panel. It is likely that the equipment was not properly rated for the available fault current. The worker was burned severely, but recovered. Protect yourself, always stand clear and use proper personal protective equipment when operating a circuit breaker, even when no live parts are exposed.

### Answer to Question of the Month:

Show your work when you send your answer to us at [ElectricalProgram@Lni.wa.gov](mailto:ElectricalProgram@Lni.wa.gov). Put "Currents question" in the subject line. Include your name and we will publish it in the next edition if you are first.



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