

ELECTRICAL CURRENTS



Question of the Month – True or False: To qualify for the journey level electrician exam, an applicant may count work hours from a specialty certification with a 4,000-hour requirement toward the apprenticeship hours needed for the (01) exam.

Grace Period for Trainees is Ending on July 1, 2026

The [law that created a grace period](#) allowing certain trainees to continue working and gaining hours of (01) experience without being registered in an apprenticeship program is no longer in effect after July 1, 2026.

After that date, all trainees must be registered in (01) general journey level electrician apprenticeship programs if they are performing (01) type work – work not included in a [specialty](#). Trainees are not required to be registered apprentices to work in a specialty.

For trainees qualifying under the grace period, L&I cannot approve applications for (01) exams received after July 1, 2026. It is the last day the law allows trainees to qualify for an (01) exam without completing the work and education requirements of an approved registered apprenticeship program.

Deadline for qualifying for exam under the grace period: Before July 2, 2026, the following must be received by L&I: The applicant's [completed exam application and fee](#), outstanding [documentation of work experience](#), and evidence they completed 96 hours of [basic classroom instruction](#).

When are Emergency Disconnects Required for Townhouse Units Supplied by Feeders?

Many changes have occurred since 2006 when articles about townhouses were first published in this newsletter. This article supersedes all previous articles on the topic.

According to the current Washington State Residential Code (WSRC), a "townhouse unit" is a one-family dwelling unit in a townhouse that extends from foundation to roof and that has a yard or public way on not less than two sides that extends at least 50 percent of the length of each of these two sides.

Emergency disconnect requirements for one-family dwelling units supplied by feeders do not apply to townhouse units when all the following conditions are met:

- Townhouse units are one of a group of three or more attached townhouse units supplied by a service consisting of one to six grouped service disconnects. The number of townhouse units supplied by each service disconnect is only limited by the ratings of equipment and conductors used.
- The one to six grouped service disconnects are in a readily accessible outdoor location on one of the units served or within sight of one of the units served.

The one to six grouped service disconnects serving the units are accessible to all occupants.

Other considerations for townhouse units:

- Wiring supplying or originating from one townhouse unit shall not run through another unit. When a common wall cavity is shared by two units, wiring from each unit is allowed to exist in the cavity only when wiring serves common wall outlets and devices.

Safety Tip of the Month

Electricians work in tight and awkward spaces, which can put a lot of stress on your body. Good posture helps keep your back straight, lowers muscle strain, and keeps you feeling strong through the day. Keep tools close, move your wrists and back in a natural way, and switch tasks to avoid fatigue.

- Fee calculations for townhouse units are based on square footage, with additional line-item fees like all other single-family dwellings.
- A separate service fee is required when three or more attached units are supplied by feeders supplied by a service consisting of one to six grouped service disconnects.

Rule Making Updates:

Electrical Vehicle Supply & Competency Exams Update

The Washington State Department of Labor & Industries (L&I) has updated draft changes to the state’s electrical rules and is seeking public input before moving to the next stage of rulemaking. The updates affect requirements for installing electric vehicle supply equipment and modify several aspects of electrician and administrator competency examinations.

Version 2 of the draft rules is available on L&I’s [Electrical Rule Development webpage](#). Preliminary comments should be submitted to CSCPSRules@Lni.wa.gov by **Friday, May 22, 2026**. L&I expects to file the CR-102 Proposed Rules in June 2026, after which a formal public comment period and public hearing will follow.

Key revisions in Version 2 include removing references to special accommodations, eliminating unique candidate identification number requirements, and adjusting multiple examination timeframes. These changes affect several sections within Chapter 296-46B WAC.

Trades-Related Fee Increase

L&I has adopted a 6.51% fee increase for the electrical program. These changes take effect July 1 and reflect the [fiscal growth factor](#) for FY 2027, which is based on average personal income growth over the past decade. The increase supports essential program operations, inspector services, and overall service delivery.

Additionally, L&I adopted a 10-cent increase to the electrician exam application fee to correct a previous agency error. This applies to master, journey-level, specialty, and reciprocal exam applications.

L&I filed the Rulemaking Order (CR-103) on May 5. More information is available on L&I’s [Rulemaking Activity webpage](#) and the laws and [rules page](#) for the electrical program.

For questions about any rulemaking contact Meagan Edwards at 360-522-0125 or CSCPSRules@Lni.wa.gov.

GFCI Protection Requirements Delayed

Appliance manufacturers and standards organizations need more time to ensure compatibility with new GFCI protection

requirements. For this reason, we are delaying enforcement of the following until December 31, 2026: 2023 NEC 210.8(A) and (B) and NEC 210.8(D)(8), (9), and (10).

Answer to the Question of the Month – True. RCW 19.28.191 states that a person who holds a **specialty electrician certificate of competency with a 4,000-hour work experience requirement** *may* use those hours toward the apprenticeship requirements needed to qualify for the journey level (01) exam. However, specialties that require **less than 4,000 hours** cannot be counted toward journey-level qualification.

Picture of the Month – The utility brought this to our attention. Everything is energized and used for several years. The owner is now working to correct the issues and remove the hazards.



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