



STATE OF WASHINGTON
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND INDUSTRIES
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May 26, 2011

Lorilee McCauley Gill, President
Alltec Controls, Inc.
10623 Montgomery
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Re: HVAC Controls and Direct Digital Controls (DDC)

Dear Ms. Gill:

Thank you for your March 4, 2011 e-mail. You asked for a determination of the correct prevailing wage scope of work (trade and occupation classification) to use for HVAC controls and, specifically, direct digital HVAC controls (DDC).

The answer below is based on the facts you provided. References to the Revised Code of Washington (RCW) and the Washington Administrative Code (WAC) are included. Again, this answer is based on your fact set. If the facts differ from those you provided, the answers may be different.

RCW 39.12.020 requires that "The hourly wages to be paid to laborers, workers or mechanics, upon all public works and under all public building service maintenance contracts of the state or any county, municipality, or political subdivision created by its laws, shall be not less than the prevailing rate of wage for an hour's work in the same trade or occupation in the locality within the state where such work is performed."

The scope of work answers identify only the correct prevailing rate(s) of wage that may apply to specific work. The appropriate prevailing wage rates do not alter, suspend or supersede any other applicable requirements in law. Other areas of law that regulate this work include the electrical licensing laws in chapter 19.28 RCW.

Neither the Electronic Technicians nor the Telecommunication Technicians prevailing rates of wage may be used for work on HVAC controls systems.

Electronic Technicians (WAC 296-127-01322) perform work on specific types of systems identified in that scope of work description. HVAC controls are not included in that list of systems that Electronic Technicians may install, inspect, maintain, operate, service or repair. Electronic Technicians do not perform work on HVAC control systems.

Telecommunication Technicians (WAC 296-127-01378) can install systems that have voice over distance communications inside buildings so long as the system does not contain any possible systems or functions that are specific to the Electronic Technician scope of work, or any work not allowed as telecommunications under the electrical licensing law, chapter 19.28 RCW. Under the electrical licensing law, the Telecommunication Technicians may not perform work on HVAC/refrigeration control systems.

The Sheet Metal Worker (WAC 296-127-01372) performs the handling, conditioning, assembling, installing, servicing, repairing, altering and dismantling of the duct work for the heating, ventilation and air conditioning systems regardless of the materials used and the setting and the servicing of all equipment and all supports and reinforcements in connection therewith; the installation of expansion and discharge valves, air filters, and water filters in heating, ventilation and air conditioning systems; as well as the testing and balancing of air-handling equipment and duct work.

The setting and servicing of the HVAC control equipment is part of the work performed by a Sheet Metal Worker.

You describe HVAC control devices powered by 24 volt alternating current; HVAC data controllers connecting to various input and output devices; HVAC sensors using five (5) volt direct current or 4-20 milliamp signals; and work to test and commission the system. The work to set and service these control devices can include the electrical work specific to those devices. A Sheet Metal Worker may perform this work to set and service these HVAC control devices.

All electrical work will be subject to other laws and regulations beyond the prevailing wage scope of work issues. Certainly, electrical licensing requirements are present under chapter 19.28 RCW.

For the prevailing wage scopes of work, there are some instances in which more than one scope of work may include the same work or task. Your facts invite a closer look at the electrical work related to the HVAC systems.

Inside Wireman Electricians (WAC 296-127-01323) plan the layout, install and repair conduit, wiring, electrical fixtures, apparatus, and control equipment in buildings and adjacent yards to provide electricity for power and lighting. They assemble, install and maintain all electrical lighting, electric heating and cooling equipment, standby motor generators, electric heat pumps, under-floor duct and luminous ceilings. The work includes, but is not limited to: The handling and moving of any electrical materials, equipment and apparatus on the job site; measuring, cutting, bending, threading, forming, assembling and installing of electrical conduit, using such tools as hacksaw, pipe threader and conduit bender; pulling wiring through conduit; cutting holes in floors and walls for electrical conduit; splicing wires by stripping insulation from terminal leads with knife or pliers, twisting or soldering wires together and applying tape or terminal caps; connecting wiring to lighting fixtures and power equipment; assembling and installing of conduit switches, relays, junction boxes, circuit breaker panels, and related accessories and controls; testing continuity of circuit to insure electrical compatibility and safety of components; and all cleanup required in connection with electrical work.

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The Inside Wireman Electrician installs and repairs apparatus and control equipment as well as working on wiring and conduit.

The work you describe to install and repair HVAC control devices powered by 24 volt alternating current; HVAC data controllers connecting to various input and output devices; HVAC sensors using five (5) volt direct current or 4-20 milliamp signals; may be performed by an Inside Wireman Electrician. That work to install and repair the apparatus and controls may include the control devices and the wiring for such devices. An Inside Wireman Electrician may perform this work to install and repair these HVAC control devices. No testing, adjusting and balancing and no commissioning of HVAC systems may be performed by Inside Wireman Electricians.

The paragraphs above identify an overlap in which certain work may be performed by the Sheet Metal Worker and/or the Inside Wireman Electrician.

In some circumstances, there is no overlap. For example, the Inside Wireman Electrician does not perform testing, adjusting, and balancing (TAB work) or commissioning on HVAC systems. The Sheet Metal Worker performs all the TAB work, HVAC commissioning, and performs all the sheet metal duct work.

You also asked about conduit and pulling of wire through conduit where the runs may be longer and "not for the specific purpose of controlling and communicating with [the] HVAC control system." These facts go outside the overlap of the scopes of work stated above. The Inside Wireman Electrician may perform such work on conduit and pulling wire in buildings. The Sheet Metal Worker prevailing wage scope of work cannot do electrical work that is not specific to the setting and servicing of the HVAC control equipment.

As you can see, the facts and circumstances are crucial to identifying the correct scope of work for prevailing wage work.

Washington State prevailing wage information, including the WACs, are available on the Department's web site: <http://www.lni.wa.gov/TradesLicensing/PrevWage/default.asp>.

I hope this answers your questions. If I may be of further assistance, please let me know.

Sincerely,



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