

# HOUSE BILL REPORT

## ESB 5210

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**As Reported by House Committee On:**  
Commerce & Labor

**Title:** An act relating to electrician certification.

**Brief Description:** Modifying electrician certification provisions.

**Sponsors:** Senators Honeyford, Rasmussen, Roach, Mulliken, T. Sheldon, Parlette and Stevens.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:**

Commerce & Labor: 3/20/03, 3/31/03 [DP].

**Brief Summary of Engrossed Bill**

- For restricted nonresidential maintenance specialty electricians, reduces work experience requirements, job site supervision requirements, and specifies the scope of work.

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### HOUSE COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE & LABOR

**Majority Report:** Do pass. Signed by 9 members: Representatives Conway, Chair; Wood, Vice Chair; Chandler, Ranking Minority Member; Condotta, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Crouse, Holmquist, Hudgins, Kenney and McCoy.

**Staff:** Jill Reinmuth (786-7134).

**Background:**

State law establishes qualifications for persons to take the examination to become certified specialty electricians, and requirements for noncertified trainees to work as specialty electricians.

These qualifications and requirements vary depending on the specialty. "Higher tier" or "4,000 hour" specialties are: Residential; pump and irrigation; sign; limited energy; nonresidential maintenance; restricted nonresidential maintenance; and other new nonresidential specialties. "Lower tier" or "2,000 hour" specialties are appliance repair

and other new residential specialties.

### Qualifications for Specialty Electricians

To become a specialty electrician in one of the "higher tier" specialties, a person must:

- Complete either 4,000 hours of full-time work experience, or an apprenticeship program in the appropriate specialty; and
- Pass the appropriate examination.

To become a specialty electrician in one of the "lower tier" specialties, a person must:

- Complete either 2,000 hours of full-time work experience, or an apprenticeship program in the appropriate specialty; and
- Pass the appropriate examination.

Up to one year of a two-year technical or trade school program may be substituted for up to one year of the required two years of work experience.

### Requirements for Noncertified Trainees

To work as a trainee in an electrical specialty, a person must obtain an electrical training certificate. This certificate allows a holder to learn the trade while working under the direct supervision of a certified electrician in accordance with certain ratio and job site supervision requirements.

A certified electrician may supervise up to two noncertified persons, or four noncertified persons enrolled in a technical or trade school program. In other words, the ratio may be up to 1:2 for noncertified persons, or up to 1:4 for noncertified persons enrolled in a technical or trade school program.

For "higher tier" specialties, the ratio determines the supervision requirement.

- If the ratio is 1:1 or 1:2, a certified electrician must be on the same job site as the trainee at least 75 percent of each working day.
- If the ratio is 1:3 or 1:4, a certified electrician must directly supervise and instruct the noncertified persons, and be on the same job site 100 percent of each working day. The certified electrician may not make or engage in electrical installation.

For "lower tier" specialties, a certified electrician must supervise the noncertified persons 100 percent of each working day during an initial period, which is a minimum of 90

days. After the initial period, if the noncertified person takes and passes the specialty examination, he or she may work without supervision.

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### **Summary of Bill:**

The restricted nonresidential maintenance specialty is limited to a maximum of 277 volts and 20 amperes for lighting branch circuits and/or a maximum of 250 volts and 60 amperes for other circuits. This specialty excludes the replacement or repair of circuit breakers.

This specialty is reclassified as a "lower tier" or "2,000 hour" specialty rather than a "higher tier" or "4,000 hour" specialty.

### Qualifications for Specialty Electricians

To become a restricted nonresidential maintenance specialty electrician, a person must:

- Complete either 2,000 hours of full-time work experience, or an apprenticeship program in the appropriate specialty; and
- Pass the appropriate examination.

Up to one year of a two-year technical or trade school program may be substituted for up to one year of the required two years of work experience.

### Requirements for Noncertified Trainees

To work as a trainee in the restricted nonresidential maintenance specialty, a person must obtain an electrical training certificate. The ratio and job site supervision requirements applicable to the restricted nonresidential maintenance specialty are as follows:

A certified electrician may supervise up to two noncertified persons, or four noncertified persons enrolled in a technical or trade school program. In other words, the ratio may be up to 1:2 for noncertified persons, or up to 1:4 for noncertified persons enrolled in a technical or trade school program.

The certified electrician must supervise the noncertified persons 100 percent of each working day during an initial period, which is a minimum of 90 days. After the initial period, if the noncertified person takes and passes the restricted nonresidential maintenance specialty examination, he or she may work without supervision.

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**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Not requested.

**Effective Date:** The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

**Testimony For:** This bill has been worked out with all the parties. The parties agreed to reduce both the scope of the work, and the work experience required to become a restricted nonresidential maintenance specialty electrician. The Department of Labor and Industries (Department) congratulates BOMA and IBEW for working out this issue. With a reduced scope of work, the reduced work experience is fair. The Department's proposed rules match this agreement. The rules require 2,000 hours of work, including 1,000 hours of supervised work. This bill has merit and should stand on its own. It maintains high standards of safety for workers and the public.

(With concerns) More and more pieces of work are being peeled away from work that licensed contractors have been doing for years. Some say they will not hire licensed contractors to do this work if licensed contractors do not support this bill.

**Testimony Against:** None.

**Testified:** (In support) Senator Honeyford, prime sponsor; Richard King, International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers; Ron Fuller, Department of Labor and Industries; Mark Gjurasic, Building Owners and Managers Association.

(With concerns) Larry Stevens, National Electrical Contractors Association.