



Washington State Department of  
Labor & Industries

# **Streamlining of Licensing Procedures for Military Service Members and Their Spouses**

*2017 Report to the Legislature*

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# Executive Summary

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## Introduction

The Department of Labor & Industries (L&I) is pleased to provide this report in response to requirements of Senate Bill 5359 (Chapter 167, 2017 Laws), passed by the Washington State Legislature in 2017. This legislation strengthens efforts to ensure that veterans and their spouses quickly and easily get credit for military experience when seeking to meet state licensing requirements. It requires professional regulating authorities to report biennially on their efforts to streamline licensing procedures for military service members and their spouses to ensure quick and efficient authorization of those who meet established criteria. It also directs L&I to provide a report to the legislature assessing how the department's licensing, certification, and apprenticeship programs apply training and experience acquired by military members and their spouses outside of Washington, and to recommend whether these L&I programs should be included in the biennial report.

## L&I licensing and certification program requirements

L&I strives to make it easy for all customers to do business with the agency, and readily accepts training and experience that military customers have received in other states when possible within the law. The Washington State Helmets to Hardhats resolution, signed in 2005 by Governor Gregoire, enabled signatory apprenticeship programs in the construction industries to allow veterans direct entry into their apprenticeship programs. Direct entry allows individuals to bypass most of the entry and waiting list procedures required for apprentice applicants. This order has enabled the department to waive some state requirements for military members.

In addition, this report provides information about:

- Programs that require extensive experience and training due to public safety and other issues, and that recognize and credit out-of-state military training and experience toward licensing or certification.
- Programs with low barriers to entry for all applicants, including for military veterans, in which training focused on Washington State code, requirements, and safety is simple and short enough that the information gained through training outweighs the additional burden placed on the participant to attend.
- Program access for military spouses.

## Programs with rigorous requirements that recognize military training and experience

L&I programs that recognize and credit military experience in meeting requirements are:

- Boiler pressure/vessel commissioning
- Electrical licensing
- Elevator licensing

- Plumber certification
- Apprenticeships

### **Programs with low barriers to entry where new training requirements are minimal and military experience does not replace those training requirements**

L&I programs with low barriers to entry that require training for all applicants include:

- Contractor registration
- Crane certification
- Factory-assembled structures certification
- Asbestos certification
- Explosives licensing

### **Program access for military spouses**

For L&I licensing and certification programs with low barriers to entry, spouses of military members must complete the same training required for all applicants. For programs with more extensive training and experience requirements, L&I evaluates each applicant on a case-by-case basis to determine whether out-of-state training and experience meets Washington standards. Where possible, all experience and training is recognized and credited.

### **Recommendations**

L&I values the service of our military veterans and their families. The department recognizes the skills and discipline gained through military service and the tremendous advantage gained when so many military veterans and families choose to remain here to live and work. Therefore, the department's licensing and certification programs are pleased to recognize and credit military training and education where it provides a meaningful advantage. In areas where additional training is required to ensure personal and public safety and familiarity with Washington codes and requirements, and where training requirements are easily obtained, L&I will continue to require such training for all customers. For these programs with low barriers to entry, no great advantage is gained for military veterans. However, L&I will continue to recognize and credit military experience in meeting requirements of other programs.

The department does not currently capture the number of veterans who request to transfer experience and training to Washington programs and cannot currently report those figures. Because L&I treats military customers the same as other customers, the department feels there is no added value in tracking them separately. Rather than spending resources tracking and reporting these figures, the department believes greater benefit can be provided for military customers by increasing coordination with other agencies to provide information about how L&I credits military experience and to encourage military customers to pursue those certifications and licensing.

In addition, L&I does not currently have a consistent process for determining whether out-of-state training received by spouses of military members meets Washington standards. The department

recommends increased coordination with other agencies and the military to find the best ways to provide and improve access for military spouses.

# Introduction

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Senate Bill (SB) 5359 (Chapter 167, 2017 Laws), passed by the Washington State Legislature in 2017, strengthens efforts to ensure that military veterans and their spouses quickly and easily get credit for military experience to meet certain state licensing requirements. Currently, the Departments of Health and Licensing issue licenses, certificates, or permits to perform a professional service and must have or establish procedures expediting and streamlining the licensing process for military members and their spouses. These streamlined processes include authorizing a person who meets established criteria to receive a temporary license to perform professional services while completing any additional Washington state requirements.

Streamlined licensing and certification procedures are required for:

- Veterans or members of the military certified or licensed in another state to perform professional services in that state,
- Individuals whose spouse is the subject of a military transfer to Washington, or
- Spouses of veterans or military members who left employment in another state to accompany their spouse to Washington.

SB 5359 requires these professional regulating authorities to report by January 1, 2018, on efforts to streamline licensing procedures for military service members and their spouses. It also directs L&I to provide this report to the legislature assessing how the department's licensing, certification, and apprenticeship programs apply training and experience acquired by military members and their spouses outside of Washington, and recommending whether L&I's programs should be included in a biennial report on this topic.

# Licensing and Certification Program Requirements

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The Department of Labor & Industries (L&I) issues various professional licenses, certificates, and permits to ensure the safety of workers and the public. The department strives to expedite licensing and certification processes for every applicant. L&I welcomes military customers, and makes every effort to credit training and experience military members and their spouses have received in other states whenever possible.

L&I's licensing and certification programs fall into two main categories: those that currently recognize and provide credit for education and training received in the military and other states, and those with low barriers to entry that enable all customers, including military members and their spouses, to quickly and easily obtain a license or certification. For this second category, state training requirements are easily met and focused on state codes and requirements not likely addressed in military training, and no great advantage is gained for military veterans.

## PROGRAMS THAT RECOGNIZE AND CREDIT MILITARY TRAINING AND EXPERIENCE

L&I programs that recognize and credit military experience in meeting requirements are:

- Apprenticeships
- Boiler pressure/vessel commissioning
- Electrical licensing
- Elevator licensing
- Plumber certification

### Apprenticeship standards

L&I's Apprenticeship program oversees the standards that govern how an apprenticeship works. The program works with about 200 apprenticeship program sponsors throughout Washington to develop their individual apprenticeship/training standards and keep them current.

Apprenticeship programs are sponsored by joint employer and labor groups, individual employers, and/or employer associations. Sponsors plan, administer, and pay for the programs. Each individual sponsor has their own application process, with most programs accepting applications on a regular basis. Programs evaluate training and experience on a case-by-case basis; all registered apprenticeship program standards in the state of Washington grant advanced standing or credit for demonstrated competency, acquired experience, training, education, or skills related to the occupation. Each sponsor evaluates training and experience gained in another state or program for credit after an individual is accepted into an apprenticeship program.

Washington's apprenticeship programs have taken specific actions to streamline acceptance of veterans into programs since implementation of the Washington State Helmets to Hardhats resolution, signed in 2005 by Governor Gregoire. This resolution enabled signatory apprenticeship programs<sup>1</sup> in the construction industries to provide veterans direct entry into their programs. Direct entry allows individuals to bypass most of the entry and waiting list procedures required for applicants.

Today, many apprenticeship program sponsors have language in their standards that speak to direct entry or preferred entry for veterans. Multiple organizations have programs in place to assist veterans seeking apprenticeship. These include:

- The Veterans in Construction Electrician (VICE) program
- The Veterans in Piping (VIP) program
- The Veterans Entering Trucking (VET) program
- The Veterans in Painting program
- A Sheet Metal Workers program for Joint Base Lewis-McChord veterans

Aside from the programs available to assist veterans seeking apprenticeship, representatives from L&I and apprenticeship programs from around the state participate in veteran hiring fairs and functions. L&I representatives do not directly recruit veterans, but do give information about apprenticeships and how to go about the application process, and can direct interested veterans to programs that match their skills and desires.

Veterans can also use their GI Bill educational benefits while enrolled in an apprenticeship program. According to the Washington Student Achievement Council, approximately 180 registered apprenticeship programs have been approved for GI Bill use as of July 2017.

### **Boiler/pressure vessel commissioning**

L&I's Boiler/Pressure Vessel program issues commissions authorizing inspectors to perform safety inspections. The program also issues operating permits for more than 115,000 boilers and unfired pressure vessels throughout Washington.

About 144 special inspectors and 11 deputy inspectors are currently commissioned in Washington. Special inspectors are third-party inspectors employed by insurance companies or owner/user organizations such as oil refineries. Deputy inspectors are inspectors employed by the state of Washington.

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<sup>1</sup>A "signatory" program is one that is connected to a registered apprenticeship program through a collective bargaining agreement or a unilateral agreement.



The Boiler/Pressure Vessel program recognizes and credits education and training obtained in the military and/or gained in another state when hiring deputy inspectors, provided the experience is equivalent to the following Washington state requirements:

- Inspectors must have five years of practical experience in the construction, maintenance, repair, or operation of high pressure boilers and unfired pressure vessels as a mechanic engineer steam engineer, boilermaker, or boiler inspector, and must pass the national board examination and Washington state examination (chapter 70.79 RCW).
- Any applicant who holds a valid national board commission and is employed by an authorized inspection agency<sup>2</sup> can qualify to take the examination to become a special inspector. A national board commission satisfies the education and work requirements and certifies the inspector is competent to perform inspections of boilers and pressure vessels.

### **Electrical certification and licensing**

L&I's Electrical program certifies electrical workers as journeyman or specialty electricians or trainees, and licenses electrical or telecommunications contractors who employ these workers. Experience requirements vary by certification type, with an (01) journey level certificate requiring at least 8,000 hours of experience to include industrial and commercial installations, while a telecommunications worker is not required to have any experience. For those certification categories with extensive experience requirements, crediting military training and experience may provide a substantial advantage.

To engage in the business of doing electrical work as a contractor, electrical or telecommunications contractors must get an electrical contractor license from L&I and submit the required bond or assignment of savings. They must also designate a master electrician or electrical administrator to ensure that their work complies with the appropriate laws and rules.

This program recognizes and credits training obtained in the military and/or gained in another state when determining whether applicants meet Washington state education and training requirements qualifying them to take an open-book examination. Applicants must pass the exam, which is available nationwide on demand, to become a certified electrician in Washington.

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<sup>2</sup>An authorized inspection agency is an organization that meets criteria and standards of the American Society of Mechanical Engineers for issuing certification to perform inspections of pressure equipment.

## **Elevator licensing**

L&I's Elevator program issues nine different types of licenses to mechanics who work on elevators and other conveyances such as escalators and specialized lifts; and to contractors who install, repair, and maintain these devices. Licensed activities include safety inspections, new installations, and upgrades to existing devices.

### **Elevator license**

Applicants for an elevator license must demonstrate competency and provide proof of combined work experience and education or skills related to elevator work to qualify for a license or to take the Washington state written examination.<sup>3</sup> The number of hours of work experience and education required depends on the type of license. For example, to obtain a general elevator mechanic license, applicants must have a minimum of three years of combined documented work experience and education<sup>4</sup> equating to a minimum of 5,400 hours of work experience and 432 hours of education. The work experience must be actual work on conveyance installations, maintenance, repair, service, and/or testing. The Elevator program recognizes and credits training obtained in the military and/or gained in another state when determining whether applicants qualify to take the exam.

### **Elevator contractor license**

Applicants for an elevator contractor license must have five years of work experience in performing conveyance work, verified by current and previous elevator contractor licenses, to qualify for a license; and they must pass the same Washington state written examination as that for an elevator license. Applicants must also be licensed contractors. Again, military members and their spouses receive credit for work experience gained in the military and/or in another state to obtain an elevator contractor license or qualify to take the written examination.

### **Temporary license**

The Elevator program issues temporary licenses to individuals who meet certain education and training requirements and are employed by a licensed elevator contractor. Military members and their spouses may receive credit for education and training gained in the military and/or in another state to qualify for a temporary license. A temporary license enables an individual to begin working immediately while waiting to take the elevator license exam. It is valid for 30 days, and may be renewed consecutively for one year.

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<sup>3</sup> Written elevator license exams are available at L&I's office in Tumwater, Washington. The program expedites the examination process on a case-by-case basis, and usually reviews and processes licenses within one week of receipt.

<sup>4</sup> Chapter 70.87 RCW prescribes qualification requirements for an elevator contractor or mechanic license examination.

## Plumber certification

The Plumbers program certifies more than 6,000 plumbers, provides oversight for about 3,000 plumber trainees and 600 medical gas installers, and tests an average of 650 plumbers each year.

All applicants for plumber certification must submit an application, meet approved education requirements, and pass the appropriate examination for their specialty area. For example, to obtain a journey level plumber license, applicants must have 8,000 documented hours and not less than four years of experience working as a plumber trainee under the supervision of a certified plumber. A minimum of 4,000 of those hours and two of the years of experience must have been spent working in commercial or industrial installation or equivalent verified training experience in the U.S. military, or the applicant must have a comparable license from another state.

Any applicant who meets the requirements and passes the examination can become certified. Individuals who are certified in other states are issued a temporary permit, valid for 120 days, that allows them time to complete continuing education requirements and study for the written examination to obtain their Washington plumber certificate. Customers under the direct supervision of a certified plumber can get a trainee card from L&I and immediately go to work.

## PROGRAMS WITH LOW BARRIERS TO ENTRY

L&I programs with low barriers to entry that require training for all applicants are:

- Contractor registration
- Crane certification
- Factory-assembled structure certification
- Asbestos certification
- Explosives licensing

These programs do not credit military training and experience, but have relatively quick and easy procedures for becoming licensed or certified.

## Contractor registration

The Contractor Registration program registers general and specialty contractors with L&I, and ensures that they are bonded and insured.

All applicants for contractor registration must complete and notarize an application for contractor registration, provide evidence that they have a contractor's surety bond or an assigned bank account, and provide evidence that they have liability insurance coverage. Any contractor who meets the bond and insurance requirements can become registered the same day that L&I receives the required application.

## Construction crane certification

L&I's Crane Safety program regulates cranes for general industry, construction, and maritime use, and certifies crane inspectors and crane operators.

### Crane certification

An accredited crane inspector must certify construction cranes for operation, and issue crane inspection and operation certification based on Washington state requirements.<sup>5</sup> Temporary certifications of operation may be issued. A final certificate may then be issued after a certified crane inspector determines that the crane meets safety or health standards that meet or exceed national periodic inspection requirements recognized by the department.

### Crane inspectors

Applicants for crane inspector certification must meet Washington state experience, education, and training requirements, as well as other requirements determined by the L&I director, to qualify to take written examinations. These requirements include:

- Demonstrated knowledge of Washington's safety standards for construction and American Society of Mechanical Engineers (ASME) standards for the design, testing, inspection, and operation of cranes, including standards for the specific types of cranes for which the applicant seeks certification.
- At least five years of experience, two of which are in actual crane inspection activities. The other three years may include experience as a crane operator, crane mechanic, crane shop foreman, crane operations supervision, or rigging specialist. Applicants may substitute two years of related education for one year of experience, provided they substitute education for no more than three years of experience. Related education includes courses such as engineering, physics, applied mathematics, applied science courses in nondestructive testing, construction technology, technical courses in heavy equipment mechanic, and welding technology.

Qualifying applicants must pass two written exams, demonstrating:

- General knowledge of operation, testing, inspection and maintenance requirements, and duties and recordkeeping responsibilities
- Knowledge of safe operating and engineering principles and practices with respect to the specific crane types for which they seek certification, including inspection and proof loading requirements.

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<sup>5</sup> RCW 49.17.400, RCW 49.17.420, WAC 296-155-52901, WAC 296-155-53100 through 53114

## **Crane operators**

To operate construction cranes in Washington, a crane operator must be certified by an agency that offers nationally-recognized certification, such as the National Commission for the Certification of Crane Operators (NCCCO) or the Crane Institute Certification (CIC).

Although L&I does not administer the certification process for crane operators, applicants must also meet agency requirements established in rule in consultation with nationally recognized crane standards for crane operator certification. Rule requirements include:

- The crane operator must have a valid crane operator certificate for the type of crane to be operated. The certificate must be issued by a nationally recognized accrediting agency which administers written and practical examinations, has procedures for recertification that enable the crane operator to recertify at least every five years, and is recognized by L&I.
- The crane operator must have up to 2,000 hours of documented crane operator experience, which meets experience levels established by L&I for crane types and capacities by rule.
- The crane operator must pass a substance abuse test conducted by a recognized laboratory service.

Apprentice operators or trainees can operate a crane when:

- They have been trained on safe operation of the crane prior to its operation;
- They perform operating tasks within their ability, as determined by the supervising qualified crane operator; and
- They are under the direct and continuous supervision of a qualified crane operator who meets the requirements of Washington law.

The law allows L&I to recognize crane operator certification from another state or territory of the United States if L&I determines that the other jurisdiction's credentialing standards are substantially similar to the qualified crane operator requirements. However, L&I does not currently offer reciprocity for crane certifiers, as no other state has a program similar to Washington's.

## **Factory-assembled structures certification**

L&I's Factory-Assembled Structures (FAS) program certifies about 350 Manufactured Home Installers in Washington.

All applicants for a certificate to install manufactured homes must successfully complete the L&I training course, pass the examination, pay the fees, and meet other qualifications – including being a registered contractor – to receive a certificate. When customers call about or apply for certification, L&I provides a timely response based on their needs. For example, if four or five new applicants need training before the next scheduled class, L&I adds a class to the schedule to enable them to become certified as quickly as possible.

The FAS program expedites the training and examination process for all applicants on a case-by-case basis. There are no specific procedures for military personnel or their spouses when applying for certification, and no reciprocal agreements for recognizing installer certifications obtained in other states. The FAS program is willing to review its certification process to consider an allowance from the existing training requirements for education and training gained in the military and/or another state, provided the experience is equivalent to Washington State requirements and is not prohibited by federal law.<sup>6</sup>

## **Asbestos certification**

L&I's Asbestos Certification program issues initial and renewal certification to asbestos workers, asbestos supervisors, and asbestos contractors per Washington state requirements.<sup>7</sup>

### **Certified asbestos workers**

All applicants to become a certified asbestos worker must pass a Washington-state certified 32-hour Asbestos Worker training course. Information covered in the course includes:

- Asbestos types, uses and building material types
- Health hazards
- Regulations
- Worker protection and decontamination issues
- Personal protective equipment
- Site safety
- State of the art work practices and engineering controls
- Hands-on training in the use of respirators
- Removal and repair of simulated asbestos materials
- Glove-bag installation, use and removal
- Construction of containments
- Decontamination
- Proper procedures for entering and exiting the regulated area

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<sup>6</sup> The minimum requirements for state administered Installer programs are set by rules from HUD in CFR 3285 and CFR 3286.

<sup>7</sup> RCW 49.26.100, RCW 49.26.110, RCW 49.26.115, WAC 296-65-005, WAC 296-65-010, WAC 296-65-007, WAC 296-65-012

Asbestos worker certification expires one year from the date of issuance. To renew a worker asbestos certification, an individual must complete an annual eight-hour Asbestos Worker Refresher training course before their certification expires.

### **Certified asbestos supervisors**

All applicants must complete a Washington-state certified 40-hour course, and complete 1,600 hours of work in one or more of L&I's five qualifying work categories.<sup>8</sup> This course includes all of the content in the 32-hour Asbestos Worker course, along with additional content including

- Supervision and management
- Administrative programs
- Proper selection and set-up of engineering controls
- Air monitoring
- Set-up and management of supplied air breathing systems
- Set-up and calibration of air sampling equipment
- Type C systems
- Respiratory protection
- Glove-bagging
- Calculating and locating ventilation requirements for an enclosure
- Three-stage personnel decontamination

An asbestos supervisor certification expires one year from the date of issuance. To renew a supervisor asbestos certification, an individual must pass an annual eight-hour Asbestos Supervisor Refresher training course before their certification expires.

### **Certified asbestos contractors**

A certified asbestos supervisor must be on the contractor payroll and have a completed and approved application as a certified asbestos contractor on file with L&I. The contractor must also comply with all Washington contractor registration and licensing requirements.

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<sup>8</sup> Qualifying work categories include asbestos abatement, asbestos project design, consultation on asbestos abatement projects, operations and maintenance program supervision, and construction project supervision.

## Explosives licensing

L&I's Explosives program issues licenses for all non-federal explosives use in Washington, including manufacture, sale and distribution, purchase, and storage of explosives. License testing is only required for use (blasting) of explosives.

Washington has licensing requirements<sup>9</sup> for 10 explosives use classifications. Fingerprint-based background checks are required for all applicants; only actively serving law enforcement personnel may be exempted from this requirement.

The only explosives license that requires testing is the blasting license. Testing is offered as needed or upon request at any L&I location or at other locations with prior coordination. Testing can be waived based on:

- Experience in the majority of the classifications listed in Washington's licensing requirements; or
- A minimum of five years of continuous full-time blasting experience in the explosives industry where blasting has been the applicant's primary responsibility during that time.

The agency has offered testing for large groups at licensees' locations, such as ski resorts, utility district offices, or SWAT training locations.

The Explosives program does not currently offer reciprocity for out-of-state training and experience; however, L&I is considering a revision of its regulations to allow reciprocity based on whether other state/government testing is equivalent to Washington standards.

## PROGRAM ACCESS FOR MILITARY SPOUSES

L&I does not currently have a standard process for determining whether out-of-state training and experience of military spouses meets Washington standards. For L&I licensing and certification programs with low barriers to entry, spouses of military members must complete the same training required for all applicants. For programs with more extensive training and experience requirements, L&I evaluates each applicant on a case-by-case basis to determine whether they meet Washington's qualification requirements.

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<sup>9</sup> RCW 70.74.020, RCW 70.74.022, WAC 296-52-64005 through 64085



# Conclusion

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L&I values the service of our military veterans and their families. The department recognizes the skills and discipline gained through military service and the tremendous advantage gained when so many military veterans and families choose to remain here to live and work. Therefore, the department's licensing and certification programs are pleased to recognize and credit military training and education where it provides a meaningful advantage. In areas where additional training is required to ensure personal and public safety and familiarity with Washington codes and requirements, and where training requirements are easily obtained, L&I will continue to require such training for all customers. For these programs with low barriers to entry, no great advantage is gained for military veterans. However, L&I will continue to recognize and credit military experience in meeting requirements of other programs.

The department does not currently capture the number of veterans who request to transfer experience and training to Washington programs and cannot currently report those figures. Because L&I treats military customers the same as other customers, the department feels there is no added value in tracking them separately. Rather than spending resources tracking and reporting these figures, the department believes greater benefit can be provided for military customers by increasing coordination with other agencies to provide information about how L&I credits military experience and to encourage military customers to pursue those certifications and licensing.

In addition, L&I does not currently have a consistent process for determining whether out-of-state training received by spouses of military members meets Washington standards. The department recommends increased coordination with other agencies and the military to find the best ways to provide and improve access for military spouses.