

ELECTRICAL CURRENTS

A Newsletter from the Office of L&I Chief Electrical Inspector Wayne Molesworth November 2024

Question of the Month - Who's jurisdiction are the requirements of the WA State Energy Codes? *See Page 2.*

Who Can Install Wiring for Office Furnishings, Cubicles, and Other Furnishings?

Anybody can assemble wall panels, work surfaces, cabinets, shelves, seating, and structural elements but not wiring. This includes switches, receptacles, flexible electrical cable assemblies with quick-connect electrical interconnections, etc.

Installation of wiring by someone other than property owners or leaseholders and their regularly employed employees is subject to laws requiring electrical contractor [licensing](#) and electrician [certification](#). Electrical apprenticeship requirements also apply: www.lni.wa.gov/ElectricalApprenticeship

What does this mean? All work installing electrical devices and wiring must be done by properly certified electricians and licensed electrical contractors unless the work is done by the property owner or leaseholder and their regularly employed employees who are not required to be contractors or electricians according to RCW [19.28.261](#)(5)(a). Leaseholders doing such work must meet conditions in WAC [296-46B-925](#)(13).

Except for some limited device replacement – see WAC [296-46B-901](#)(7)(b)(i) for a list of permit exempt work – the work will generally require an electrical permit and inspection. The permit must be obtained prior to beginning any electrical work. Permit fees are generally based upon the addition or alteration of commercial branch circuits described in WAC [296-46B-906](#)(2)(c). Learn more about office furnishings, see NEC® Article 605.

Avoid Delays and Permit Refund Processing Fees

Sometimes it is difficult to figure out who issues permits and performs inspections. This is particularly complex in Pierce County. [Tacoma Power](#) issues permits and performs inspections for properties they serve in the cities of Tacoma, Fircrest, University Place, Fife, parts of Steilacoom, Lakewood, and unincorporated Pierce County as far south as Roy. Here is a [more detailed map](#) of their service area. You can verify your jurisdiction before purchasing a permit to avoid inspection delays and refund processing fees.

Find out if your project is within one of the [city inspection jurisdictions](#) with this tool: <https://webgis.dor.wa.gov/taxratelookup/SalesTax.aspx>. Start by entering the street address and zip code. If no city is named under the Sales & Use tab, the address is in the county named. A city name is present only when the address is within a city. There is no guarantee that the tool is always up to date, but it is highly accurate. Learn more: <https://www.lni.wa.gov/licensing-permits/electrical/electrical-licensing-exams-education/electrician>.

Safety Tip of the Month

As an electrical professional, be alert for electrical hazards on the jobsite that may injure or kill unsuspecting coworkers. Never leave an energized electrical panel without a cover. Make sure receptacles used for temporary power are GFCI protected, and be on the lookout for improper temporary wiring splices and damaged cords or tools.

What Hours Count as Electrical Experience?

We are often asked what kind of experience counts toward qualifying for an examination. We now have a webpage dedicated to the subject:

<https://www.lni.wa.gov/licensing-permits/electrical/electrical-licensing-exams-education/electrical-trainee#what-hours-count-as-electrical-experience>.

If you have a training certificate, make sure to turn in your hours of experience on time and complete required education and renew it before it expires. Learn more: www.lni.wa.gov/ElectricalTrainee

Become an Electrical Construction Inspector

Have you been a Washington (01) journey level electrician for four years? Have you applied for and passed the open book electrical assessment? If so you may qualify to become an electrical inspector.

You will be required to pass an Electrical Program Technical Assessment as part of the application process for Electrical Construction Inspector positions. This is an open book assessment that covers the NEC, WAC, RCW, Electrical theory and wiring diagrams. Applicants must supply all of the materials they intend to use to include but not limited to codebooks and non-programmable calculators. Computers and cell phones will not be allowed.

The schedule for assessments is:

1st Tuesday of each month: [7273 Linderson Way SW, Tumwater](#)

2nd Tuesday of each month: [12806 Gateway Drive S, Tukwila](#)

3rd Tuesday of each month: [3001 W Broadway Avenue, Moses Lake](#)

Please send an email to electricalassessment@lni.wa.gov to schedule your exam.

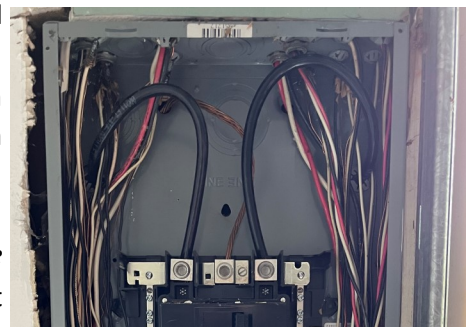
Upon completion, you will receive an email containing your results and you will have to attach that to your application submission. If you do not schedule and pass the assessment within two weeks of the position, closing you will not be considered for the position. Your passing results of the assessment will be good for one year and can be used for other positions at the agency.

*** Persons with a disability who need accommodation in the testing process may call 360-902-5700. TTY users should first call 711 to access the Washington Relay Service.*

There are positions available throughout the year in different locations. [Please watch for job postings](#) .

Answer to Question of the Month: The state building code, required by [RCW 19.27](#) shall be enforced by the counties and cities per 19.27.050. L&I would inspect the methods and means of the installations, similar to a fire alarm system. The interpretation and enforcement of energy codes are the jurisdiction of the cities and counties.

Picture of the Month: *If viewing this document online, click on the picture to open a larger image.* This panel had been changed out before the current owner purchased the home. There is no conduit system for the service entrance conductors and no main bonding jumper.



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Electrical Section website: www.lni.wa.gov/ - Select Licensing & Permits, then Electrical

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