

ELECTRICAL CURRENTS



Question of the Month –

You arrive at a customer's single-family home to knock out a handful of quick, routine repairs. Because the client is on a tight budget and timeline, you plan to stick entirely to like-in-kind replacements that qualify as Class A basic electrical work, allowing you to complete the job right then and there without needing a new electrical permit.

Which of the following tasks is not Class A basic electrical work and would trigger the need for an electrical work permit?

- A) Replacing a single 8-horsepower water pump motor .
- B) Replacing a single backup battery rated at 120 amp-hours.
- C) Replacing six 120-volt AFCI protected receptacle outlets in a dwelling.
- D) Replacing a 120-volt smoke detector in a single-family home.

Safety Tip of the Month

As kids head back to class, school zones are active again. Slow down, avoid distractions, and pay close attention to your surroundings when entering and exiting these areas. If you are working at a school, secure your workspace with proper barriers. Watch for children who may not see your truck or tools. Staying alert on the way to and from the job keeps everyone safe!

A Note from the Chief Electrical Inspector – What happens when we change the code edition?

On December 31, 2026, Washington officially adopts the 2026 National Electrical Code (NEC). There are always challenges with the change about the permitting of existing projects, continuing education and certification exam updates.

Existing Projects:

The 2026 NEC applies to all installations where the electrical permit is issued on or after December 31, 2026. There are two exceptions:

- New one-family, two-family, or multifamily dwellings can be installed to the previous code only if the building permit was issued before December 31, 2026.
- Projects requiring plan review under WAC 296-46B-900, provided plans were received and accepted for review before December 31, 2026.

Code Update Classes:

Under WAC 296-46B-970(4)(b), continuing education course approvals are typically valid for three years. However, all "code update" based on a previous code edition are automatically revoked on the date the new NEC is adopted.

Examination Update:

The state electrical examinations will be updated to the 2026 NEC in July of 2027.

Fees for After-Hours Electrical Inspections

If you need an inspection outside of normal business hours, you must arrange it ahead of time with your [local electrical inspection supervisor](#) or the [Virtual Electrical Inspection](#) (VEI) supervisor if eligible for a VEI inspection.

After-hours inspections require extra fees on top of your regular permit fee. How much you pay depends on how much notice you give:

- With 24 Hours' Notice or More: If you schedule the inspection at least 24 hours in advance (and before noon on the previous working day), you will pay the standard portal-to-portal hourly rate plus your regular permit fee.
- With Less Than 24 Hours' Notice: If you do not give at least 24 hours' notice, you will pay the portal-to-portal hourly rate, your regular permit fee, plus an after-hours emergency inspection surcharge (currently \$151.10).

Important Payment Rules:

These specific after-hours fees can be paid online once an inspector has added the fee to your permit.

Exception for Entertainment Events:

Temporary stage or concert inspections follow different rules. For these events, you will pay whichever is more expensive: the standard permit fee or the portal-to-portal hourly fee. An emergency inspection surcharge will also be added if you did not schedule it in advance.

Understanding the Electrical Board Appeals: Key Deadlines and Rules

Under WAC [296-46B-995](#), appeals to the electrical board are [limited in scope](#) and have strict timelines and procedures.

Filing Requirements & Deadlines

- You must file most written appeals within 20 days of receiving a decision.
- All appeals must be received at the **L&I Headquarters in Tumwater, WA** by the due date, not at a local service location.
- Fees range from \$100 to \$200 depending on the violation, with a \$1,000 maximum cap.
- Your paperwork must be received at least 60 days before a scheduled meeting to include it on that agenda.
- Rescheduling requests require 30 days' written notice, and dispositive motions require 45 days' notice.

Hearing & Legal Rules

Your appeal must clearly detail specific objections to ensure a prompt hearing. The **burden of proof** shifts depending on the scenario: the department holds the burden for initial penalty appeals, but you hold the burden if you are appealing a proposed decision from the Office of Administrative Hearings (OAH). Finally, if you are unsatisfied with the board's final order, you have **30 days** from the date of service to seek a judicial review in court. Find the complete rule in WAC [296-46B-995](#).

Answer to the Question of the month:

Answer is C – [WAC 296-46B-901](#) state that you are allowed to replace a maximum of five snap switches, dimmers, receptacle outlets, thermostats, or heating elements. Replacing *six* receptacles exceeds this legal limit, meaning the work would no longer qualify as Class A basic electrical work and would no longer be exempt from permitting requirements. What is always required is a licensed electrical contractor with certified installers if not exempt under RCW [19.28.261](#)(5)(a).

Picture of the Month:

This industrial facility has seen better days. How many corrections can you find?
Here is a head start:

- Supporting of conduits
- Use of flexible cords

What else can you find?



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