



FILE UNDER AB: 2019 - 210
DATE RECEIVED: 4.23.2019
SUBMITTED BY: Rob Bartell
 COUNCIL MEETING
 COMMITTEE
EXHIBIT: B

Electrician

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About Becoming an Electrician

You must have a valid electrician certificate to work in the electrical construction trade in Washington State.

The electrical construction trade includes but is not limited to installing or maintaining electrical wires and equipment that are used for light, heat, or power and installing and maintaining remote control, signaling, power limited, or communication circuits or systems.

What is required to become a general journey level or specialty electrician?

To become a certified **general journey level** or **specialty electrician** in Washington, while you are an [Electrical Trainee](#) you must do the following:

1. **Get the required amount of experience to qualify for a general journey level or specialty electrician certificate.**

⊖ **General journey level electrician (O1) – Certified to work in commercial/industrial and all specialty categories.**

8,000 documented hours working as an electrical trainee under the supervision of a certified electrician.

Note: 4,000 hours must be spent working in commercial or industrial installation.

After June 30, 2023, to qualify for the general journey level electrician (ELO1) examination you must have completed a recognized electrical apprenticeship program.

After June 30, 2023, to work on a commercial jobsite, you must be a registered apprentice in a recognized electrical apprenticeship program.

– OR –

Equivalent training or experience in the U.S. military with verification.

– OR –

Experience earned in another state.

96 hours of basic classroom instruction.

⊖ **Specialty electrician** – Certified to work in one or more of the following electrical specialties.

If you meet the requirements for one of these specialties, you can apply for a **Specialty Electrician's certificate in that specialty.**

⊖ **Residential (02)**

4,000 documented hours working in the specialty under supervision of a certified electrician.

– OR –

Equivalent training or experience in the U.S. military with verification.

– OR –

Experience earned in another state.

48 hours of basic classroom instruction.

⊕ **Pump and irrigation (03)**

4,000 documented hours working in the specialty under supervision of a certified electrician.

– OR –

Equivalent training or experience in the U.S. military with verification.

– OR –

Experience earned in another state.

48 hours of basic classroom instruction.

⊕ **Domestic well (3A)**

2,000 documented hours working in the specialty under supervision of a certified electrician.

– OR –

Equivalent training or experience in the U.S. military with verification.

– OR –

Experience earned in another state.

24 hours of basic classroom instruction.

⊕ **Signs (04)**

department in rule, or other new nonresidential specialties, not including appliance repair, as determined by the department in rule, either a master journey level electrician, journey level electrician, master specialty electrician working in that electrician's specialty, or specialty electrician working in that electrician's specialty must be on the same job site as the noncertified individual for a minimum of seventy-five percent of each working day. Other specialties must meet the requirements specified in RCW 19.28.191(1)(d)(ii). When the ratio of certified electricians to noncertified individuals on a job site is one certified electrician to three or four noncertified individuals, the certified electrician must:

- (a) Directly supervise and instruct the noncertified individuals and the certified electrician may not directly make or engage in an electrical installation; and
 - (b) Be on the same job site as the noncertified individual for a minimum of one hundred percent of each working day.
- (6) The electrical contractor shall accurately verify and attest to the electrical trainee hours worked by electrical trainees on behalf of the electrical contractor.

19.28.171 Electrical trainee hours — Audit — Rules — Confidentiality.

The department may audit the records of an electrical contractor that has verified the hours of experience submitted by an electrical trainee to the department under RCW 19.28.161(2) in the following circumstances: Excessive hours were reported; hours reported outside the normal course of the contractor's business; the type of hours reported do not reasonably match the type of permits purchased; or for other similar circumstances in which the department demonstrates a likelihood of excessive hours being reported. The department shall limit the audit to records necessary to verify hours. The department shall adopt rules implementing audit procedures. Information obtained from an electrical contractor under the provisions of this section is confidential and is not open to public inspection under chapter 42.56 RCW.

19.28.181 Application for certificate of competency.

Any person desiring to be issued a certificate of competency as provided in this chapter shall deliver evidence in a form prescribed by the department affirming that said person has met the qualifications required under RCW 19.28.191 and 19.28.205. An electrician from another jurisdiction applying for a certificate of competency must provide evidence in a form prescribed by the department affirming that the person has the equivalent qualifications to those required under RCW 19.28.191.

19.28.191 Certificate of competency — Eligibility for examination — Rules. * Effective until July 1, 2023 *** See 2018 SSB 6126 *****

- (1) Upon receipt of the application, the department shall review the application and determine whether the applicant is eligible to take an examination for the master journey level electrician, journey level electrician, master specialty electrician, or specialty electrician certificate of competency.
- (a) Before July 1, 2005, an applicant who possesses a valid journey level electrician certificate of competency in effect for the previous four years and a valid general administrator's certificate may apply for a master journey level electrician certificate of competency without examination.
 - (b) Before July 1, 2005, an applicant who possesses a valid specialty electrician certificate of competency, in the specialty applied for, for the previous two years and a valid specialty administrator's certificate, in the specialty applied for, may apply for a master specialty electrician certificate of competency without examination.
 - (c) Before December 1, 2003, the following persons may obtain an equipment repair specialty electrician certificate of competency without examination:
 - (i) A person who has successfully completed an apprenticeship program approved under chapter 49.04 RCW for the machinist trade; and
 - (ii) A person who provides evidence in a form prescribed by the department affirming that:
 - (A) He or she was employed as of April 1, 2003, by a factory-authorized equipment dealer or service company; and
 - (B) he or she has worked in equipment repair for a minimum of four thousand hours.
 - (d) To be eligible to take the examination for a master journey level electrician certificate of competency, the applicant must have possessed a valid journey level electrician certificate of competency for four years.
 - (e) To be eligible to take the examination for a master specialty electrician certificate of competency, the applicant must have possessed a valid specialty electrician certificate of competency, in the specialty applied for, for two years.
 - (f) To be eligible to take the examination for a journey level certificate of competency, the applicant must have:
 - (i) Worked in the electrical construction trade for a minimum of eight thousand hours, of which four thousand hours shall be in industrial or commercial electrical installation under the supervision of a master journey level electrician or journey level electrician and not more than a total of four thousand hours in all specialties under the supervision of a master journey level electrician, journey level electrician, master specialty electrician working in that electrician's specialty, or specialty electrician working in that

electrician's specialty. Specialty electricians with less than a four thousand hour work experience requirement cannot credit the time required to obtain that specialty towards qualifying to become a journey level electrician; or

(ii) Successfully completed an apprenticeship program approved under chapter 49.04 RCW for the electrical construction trade.

(g)

(i) To be eligible to take the examination for a specialty electrician certificate of competency, the applicant must have:

(A) Worked in the residential (as specified in WAC 296-46B-920(2)(a)), pump and irrigation (as specified in WAC 296-46B-920(2)(b)), sign (as specified in WAC 296-46B-920(2)(d)), limited energy (as specified in WAC 296-46B-920(2)(e)), nonresidential maintenance (as specified in WAC 296-46B-920(2)(g)), or other new nonresidential specialties as determined by the department in rule under the supervision of a master journey level electrician, journey level electrician, master specialty electrician working in that electrician's specialty, or specialty electrician working in that electrician's specialty for a minimum of four thousand hours;

(B) Worked in the appliance repair specialty as determined by the department in rule, restricted nonresidential maintenance as determined by the department in rule, the equipment repair specialty as determined by the department in rule, the pump and irrigation specialty other than as defined by (g)(i)(A) of this subsection or domestic pump specialty as determined by the department in rule, or a specialty other than the designated specialties in (g)(i)(A) of this subsection for a minimum of the initial ninety days, or longer if set by rule by the department. 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 excluding the replacement or repair of circuit breakers. The department may alter the scope of work for the restricted nonresidential maintenance specialty by rule. The initial period must be spent under one hundred percent supervision of a master journey level electrician, journey level electrician, master specialty electrician working in that electrician's specialty, or specialty electrician working in that electrician's specialty. After this initial period, a person may take the specialty examination. If the person passes the examination, the person may work unsupervised for the balance of the minimum hours required for certification. A person may not be certified as a specialty electrician in the appliance repair specialty or in a specialty other than the designated specialties in (g)(i)(A) of this subsection, however, until the person has worked a minimum of two thousand hours in that specialty, or longer if set by rule by the department; or

(C) Successfully completed an approved apprenticeship program under chapter 49.04 RCW for the applicant's specialty in the electrical construction trade.

(ii) In meeting the training requirements for the pump and irrigation or domestic pump specialties, the individual shall be allowed to obtain the experience required by this section at the same time the individual is meeting the experience required by RCW 18.106.040(1)(c). After meeting the training requirements provided in this section, the individual may take the examination and upon passing the examination, meeting additional training requirements as may still be required for those seeking a pump and irrigation, or a domestic pump specialty certificate as defined by rule, and paying the applicable fees, the individual must be issued the appropriate certificate. The department may include an examination for specialty plumbing certificate defined in RCW 18.106.010(10)(c) with the examination required by this section. The department, by rule and in consultation with the electrical board, may establish additional equivalent ways to gain the experience requirements required by this subsection. Individuals who are able to provide evidence to the department, prior to January 1, 2007, that they have been employed as a pump installer in the pump and irrigation or domestic pump business by an appropriately licensed electrical contractor, registered general contractor defined by chapter 18.27 RCW, or appropriate general specialty contractor defined by chapter 18.27 RCW for not less than eight thousand hours in the most recent six calendar years shall be issued the appropriate certificate by the department upon receiving such documentation and applicable fees. The department shall establish a single document for those who have received both an electrical specialty certification as defined by this subsection and have also met the certification requirements for the specialty plumber as defined by RCW 18.106.010(10)(c), showing that the individual has received both certifications. No other experience or training requirements may be imposed.

(iii) Before July 1, 2015, an applicant possessing an electrical training certificate issued by the department is eligible to apply one hour of every two hours of unsupervised telecommunications system installation work experience toward eligibility for examination for a limited energy system certificate of competency (as specified in WAC 296-46B-920(2)(e)), if:

(A) The telecommunications work experience was obtained while employed by a contractor licensed under this chapter as a general electrical contractor (as specified in WAC 296-46B-920(1)) or a limited energy system specialty contractor (as specified in WAC 296-46B-920(e)); and

(B) Evidence of the telecommunications work experience is submitted in the form of an affidavit prescribed by the department.