

ELECTRICAL CURRENTS

A Newsletter from the Office of L&I Chief Electrical Inspector Wayne Molesworth September 2025

Questions of the Month Is an EL01 general journey level electrician permitted to disconnect and/or reconnect a secondary service drop on the utility's side of the meter? *See correct answer on page 2.*

Changes to qualify for the (01) exam coming July 1, 2026: Part 1

Back in spring 2023, ESSB 5320 opened a temporary path to the (01) journey-level electrician exam to complete their hours without required registered apprenticeship. To qualify, applicants had to have had either:

- 3,000 hours of experience in electrical construction, or
- Completed a two-year electrical training program before July 1, 2023

This option expires July 1, 2026.

To apply under this provision, all affidavits of experience (8,000 hours required), exam applications, and supporting documents must be submitted **before** July 1, 2026. After that date, applicants will need to complete the work experience and education requirements of a [registered apprenticeship](#) to qualify for the (01) exam.

Stay tuned—future editions of this newsletter will cover additional changes coming July 1, 2026.

Heads-Up: More GFCI Requirements are on the way

The 2026 NEC is almost here, and GFCI rules are expanding. Here's are some proposed changes you need to know:

- All EVSE outlets and receptacles will require GFCI protection, including Special Purpose GFCIs for systems over 150V to ground
- Outdoor outlets, appliances, and HVAC equipment will fall under new High Frequency (HF/HF+) GFCI standards

If you're bidding jobs or planning installs, these changes could impact your specs and compliance checks. Stay ahead—check out the latest updates at [NFPA 70](#) (NEC) Code Development.

Qualified Electrical Worker Training Requirements for Energized Service Drops

Under WAC [296-45](#), qualified electrical workers must be trained to safely work on energized primary and secondary conductors that typically lack overcurrent protection. This training authorizes them to take clearance, meaning they can control the energy source and work on the lines or equipment when needed.

Washington-certified electricians may not receive training specifically focused on energized systems, except for testing or when de-energizing is not feasible.

For safety-related work practices:

- See WAC [296-24-965](#) and [NFPA 70E](#) for guidance on working with energized utilization systems under specific conditions.
- Refer to WAC [296-45-065](#) for rules related to utility-side work beyond the service point.

Safety Tip of the Month

Arc-flash burns and other serious injuries can occur when working along energized service drops or other exposed electrical conductors.

Don't take unnecessary risks with your safety!

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Rulemaking Updates

We have 2 rule makings going on currently, here are updates.

EVSE and Exam Requirements

We are considering changes to:

- Adopt requirements under Substitute Senate Bill 5528 ([SSB 5528](#)) that created additional certification requirements for electricians performing work on electrical vehicle supply equipment on all public works projects.
- Changes to streamline requirements for electrician and administrator competency examinations.

The latest version of the [draft proposed rules](#) are now available online at the agency's [Electrical Rule Development webpage](#).

This is your opportunity to provide input before we file the CR-102 Proposed Rules. Please send input to Meagan Edwards at FSPS.Rules@lni.wa.gov. All preliminary input must be received **by Friday, September 26**. There will also be opportunities to provide comments during the formal public comment period after we file the CR-102 in October 2025.

2026 NEC Adoption , NM-B Temperature Rating, Clarifying Deadlines for Trainees to Report hours of Work Experience

The agency filed a [CR-102 Proposed Rulemaking](#) on Sept. 2, 2025. If adopted, the rules would take effect Dec. 19, 2025.

Review the [draft proposed rules](#). Learn more: [L&I rulemaking](#) or the [Electrical Laws, Rules and Policies page](#).

A public hearing on the proposed rules will take place **Oct. 7, 2025, at 9 a.m.** at L&I headquarters, 7273 Linderson Way S.W., Tumwater, WA. You can also join by:

- **Zoom:** Click [here](#) to join the meeting: Passcode: pL44P%*N
- **Telephone:** 253-215-8782 Meeting ID: 828 5066 4292 Passcode: 45660174
- **Testimony and Written Comments:** If you are unable to attend and testify, send your written testimony by **5 p.m. on Tuesday, Oct. 7, 2025** to: Meagan Edwards
Email: Meagan.Edwards@lni.wa.gov or by mail Department of Labor & Industries,
P.O. Box 44400, Olympia, WA 98504-4400

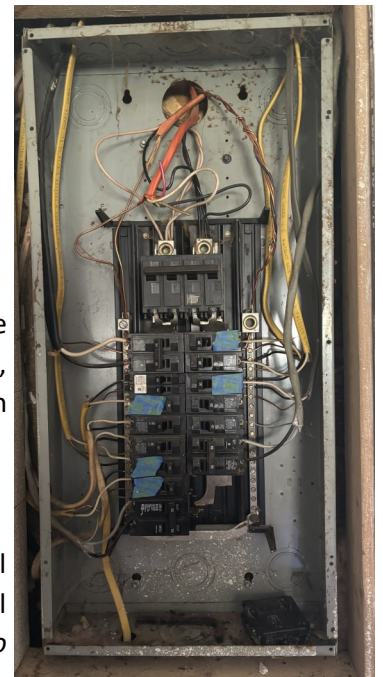
If you require communication or accommodation arrangements, please contact Meagan Edwards at 360-522-0125, by Sept. 23, 2025.

Answer to Question of the Month:

The short answer is no - only individuals who meet the training and experience requirements in [WAC 296-45](#), *Electric Power Generation, Transmission, and Distribution*, are considered to be “qualified electrical employees” and able to work on or with exposed energized lines or parts of equipment operating at 50 volts or more.

Picture of the Month:

There is a lot going on in this electrical panelboard. Most interesting is the parallel conductors used to energize the main breaker. 2023 NEC 310.10(G) requires all parallel installation to be at least size 1/0. *If viewing this document online, click on the picture to open a larger image.*



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