



Associated Builders  
and Contractors, Inc.

Wisconsin Chapter

# ELECTRICAL LICENSING GUIDE

## Wisconsin's New Law

*Many of the recent changes to Wisconsin's electrical licensing law were established by legislation passed in March of 2008. In addition to requiring statewide licensing, this legislation provided for a 5-year delayed effective date (April 1, 2013) to give people time to get the credentials required by the 2008 law.*

### The Important Facts You Need to Know

#### How ABC Can Help You

##### ABC of Wisconsin Electrical Exam Preparation Training –

Starting April 2, 2014. This is a review course to prepare for the Wisconsin Journeyman and Masters electrical exams. See [www.abcwi.org](http://www.abcwi.org) for more information.

- **Effective April 1, 2014** - Everyone (with certain exceptions) working as an electrician or in business as an electrical contractor will need to be licensed or registered with the Wisconsin Department of Safety and Professional Services (DSPS).
- **Electricians** - If you have a current DSPS electrical credential (i.e. Master license, Journeyman license, Apprentice or Beginning Electrician registration) you will be in compliance with the new law.
- **Apprentices** - If you are an active apprentice in a registered apprenticeship program, and have a current DSPS electrical credential (i.e. Apprentice or Beginning Electrician registration), you will be in compliance with the new law.
- **Electrical Contractor** - If you have a current Electrical Contractor license and you are or employ a Master Electrician, you will be in compliance with the new law. If you are not a Master Electrician or do not employ a Master electrician, you will need to meet this requirement in order to be an Electrical Contractor.
- **No DSPS Credential** – If you do not have a current DSPS credential, you will need to either obtain a Master Electrician license, Journeyman license, or register as a Beginning Electrician. Beginning Electricians will be “converted” to Registered Electricians in the future.
- **Exemptions** - Many types of “electrical work” are exempt from the licensing requirement.
- **Grandfathering** - There is a very limited grandfathering clause affecting only individuals born before January 1, 1956.
- **Further Details** - Many “details” not addressed in the law will be established by Administrative Rules. The Administrative Rules have not yet been approved.



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### Legislative Changes Began in 2008

Many of the recent changes to Wisconsin's electrical licensing law were established by legislation passed in March of 2008. In addition to requiring statewide licensing, this legislation provided for a 5-year delayed effective date (April 1, 2013) to give people time to get the credentials required by the 2008 law.

As the effective date approached, some of those regulated by the new law raised concerns and in March of 2013 the legislature pushed back the effective date of the legislation another year (April 1, 2014) in order to consider changes. In February of 2014 the legislature passed new legislation making several changes to the 2008 law but keeping the effective date of April 1, 2014.

Now, under provisions that will become law on **April 1, 2014**, no person may work as an electrician, and no person<sup>i</sup> may engage in business as an electrical contractor, unless that person is licensed by, or registered with, the Department of Safety and Professional Services.

### Credentialing Requirements Effective April 1, 2014

<b>Electrical Contractor</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ No person may engage in the business of installing, repairing, or maintaining electrical wiring unless the person is licensed as an electrical contractor by the department of safety and professional services.</li> <li>✓ No person who is not a master electrician may install, repair, or, maintain electrical wiring unless a master electrician is at all times responsible for the persons work.</li> </ul>
<b>Master Electricians</b>	<p><b>At least one of the following:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ A bachelor's degree or master's degree in electrical engineering, followed by passage of an examination.</li> <li>✓ 12 months of experience as a journeyman electrician, followed by passage of an examination.</li> <li>✓ 60 months, with at least 10,000 hours experience, followed by passage of an examination.</li> </ul>
<b>Journeyman Electricians</b>	<p><b>At least one of the following:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Completion of a construction electrician apprenticeship program lasting at least 3 years<sup>ii</sup> and that is approved by the U.S. department of labor or the department of workforce development, followed by passage of an examination.</li> <li>✓ 48 months, with at least 8,000 hours experience, followed by passage of an examination (completion of a 2-year approved program shall be equivalent to 12 months and 2,000 hours of experience).</li> </ul>
<b>Apprentice Electricians</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ The department of safety and professional services must promulgate rules for the registration of electrical apprentices.</li> </ul>
<b>Registered Electricians</b> (formerly Beginning Electricians)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ The department of safety and professional services must promulgate rules that establish procedures for the enrollment of registered electricians.</li> <li>✓ Registered electricians must be supervised by licensed journeyman or master electricians.</li> <li>✓ The department must promulgate rules to differentiate the scope of installation, repair, or maintenance of electrical wiring that may be performed by registered electricians.</li> </ul>
<b>Grandfathering</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Persons born on or before January 1, 1956 and who have at least 15 years of experience in installing, repairing, or maintaining electrical wiring will be regulated under separate rules to be developed.</li> <li>✓ It is generally presumed that these individual will not be required to pass an examination and may be limited by other restriction.</li> </ul>



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### Exemptions to Wisconsin's Electrical Licensing Law

1. A residential property owner who installs, repairs, or maintains electrical wiring on premises that the property owner owns and occupies as a residence, unless a license or registration issued by the department is required by local ordinance.
2. A person engaged in maintaining or repairing electrical wiring within an existing facility or on premises owned or leased by the person or by an entity for which the person is an agent or employee.
3. A person engaged in installing, repairing, or maintaining electrical wiring, apparatus, or equipment for elevators and escalators.
4. A person engaged in installing, repairing, or maintaining equipment or systems that operate at 100 volts or less.
5. A person engaged in installing, repairing, or maintaining an electronic system designed to monitor a premise for the presence of an emergency, to issue an alarm for an emergency, or to detect and summon aid for an emergency.
6. A person engaged in installing, repairing, or maintaining electrical wiring of facilities that support telecommunication services that is provided by a telecommunications provider.
7. A person engaged in installing, repairing, or maintaining manufactured equipment or utilization equipment, including ballasts, electric signs and luminaries or any other manufactured system that is designed to provide a function that is not primarily electrical in nature if the installation, repair, or maintenance does not involve the modification or installation of branch circuit conductors that are external to the manufactured or utilization equipment or other manufactured system.
8. A person engaged in installing electrical wiring for components of a manufactured home or a manufactured building, while the manufactured home or the manufactured building is at or in the facility at which it is being manufactured.
9. A person employed by an electricity provider, or a subcontractor of an electricity provider, who installs, repairs, or maintains electrical wiring for equipment that is installed in the normal course of providing utility services by the electricity provider.
10. A person engaged in installing, repairing, or maintaining electrical wiring that provides lighting or signals for public thoroughfares and for public airports.
11. A person engaged in installing, repairing, or maintaining electric lines on the utility side of substations and other distribution facilities owned or operated by customers or members of electricity providers.
12. A person employed by an electricity provider, or a subcontractor of an electricity provider, who installs, repairs, or maintains primary voltage electric facilities that are owned by the electricity provider's customers or members and that operate at greater than 600 volts.
13. A person employed by an electricity provider, or a subcontractor of an electricity provider, who restores service during an emergency.
14. A person who installs a replacement for an existing switch or outlet, if the replacement switch or outlet has a rating of not more than 20 amperes.
15. A person engaged in installing electrical wiring within an existing industrial facility or existing manufacturing facility owned or leased by the person or by an entity for which the person is an agent or employee.
16. A person who installs electrical wiring without receiving payment in a new one or two family dwelling that is being constructed by a qualified nonprofit corporation.

### Municipal Authority

Municipal licenses and registrations issued to electricians, electrical contractors, and electrical inspectors are no longer valid (or required) as of March 31, 2014. Municipalities may no longer impose any registration, licensing, or certification requirements on electrical contractors, electricians, or electrical inspectors. And no person may work as an electrician, and no person may engage in business as an electrical contractor, unless that person is licensed by, or registered with, the Department of Safety and Professional Services.

### Reciprocity

Many of the most recent changes were intended to facilitate reciprocal agreements with neighboring states. The 2014 legislation allows the department to enter into reciprocal agreements with other states provided the credentials are comparable, the individual submits an application, and pays the fee. It is presumed the department will begin to negotiate such agreements.



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### Topics to be Further Defined in Administrative Rules

#### Inspections

- ✓ Current law requires the department to establish rules for the inspection of electrical wiring.
- ✓ This legislation prohibits the department from requiring inspection of electrical wiring in an existing industrial facility unless the project required plan review.
- ✓ Under the bill, all inspections shall be performed by inspectors certified by the department.
- ✓ Promulgate rules that establish criteria for the certification of electrical inspectors.

#### Registered electricians and electrical apprentices

- ✓ Promulgate rules that establish criteria for the enrollment of registered electrician and the registration of electrical apprentices.
- ✓ Promulgate rules that establish requirements for the supervision of registered electricians.

#### Registration and licensing procedure

- ✓ Promulgate rules that establish the procedures for the licensing of journeyman electricians and master electricians.

#### Suspension or revocation

- ✓ Establish criteria and a process for the suspension and revocation of registrations and licenses.

#### Types of electricians

- ✓ The department may promulgate rules that recognize and regulate different types and subtypes of electricians.

#### Scope of work

- ✓ Promulgate rules to differentiate the scope of installation, repair, or maintenance that may be performed by electrical contractors, registered electricians, journeyman electricians, master electricians, and any additional type of electrician created in rules.

#### Continuing Education

- ✓ Continuing Education requirements for all types of electricians will be defined in Administrative Rule.

### Additional Resources

- For Master or Journeyman electrician exam locations check the Department of Safety and Professional Services website ([www.dsps.wi.gov](http://www.dsps.wi.gov)).
- If you are unable to schedule an exam before April 1, 2014, register as a "Beginning Electrician" on the DSPS website ([www.dsps.wi.gov](http://www.dsps.wi.gov)).
- ABC of Wisconsin has Electrical Exam Preparation training (Master and Journeyman) scheduled starting on April 2nd and concluding on May 21st. Visit [www.abcwi.org](http://www.abcwi.org) and click on the "events" tab for more details. For more information contact Elizabeth Roddy at 608-244-6050 or [eroddy@abcwi.org](mailto:eroddy@abcwi.org).
- For questions about this document contact: John Mielke at 608-244-5883 or [jmielke@abcwi.org](mailto:jmielke@abcwi.org).

*This guide is intended to be a summary of the major provisions of Wisconsin's electrical licensing laws. For actual language<sup>iii</sup> refer to Wisconsin State Statute Ch. 101 and Wisconsin Administrative Rule SPS 305.40.*

See "Exemptions to Wisconsin's Electrical Licensing Laws"

The actual length of approved apprenticeship programs is determined by either the Wisconsin Bureau of Apprenticeship Standard or the U.S. Department of Labor Websites and printed material may not yet be updated to reflect changes in law and Administrative Rule resulting in confusing or seemingly contradictory information.

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