

Wisconsin's New Electrician Licensing and Registration Requirements

Starting on April 1, 2014, most electricians in Wisconsin must be licensed or registered by the state's Department of Safety and Professional Services (the DSPS). According to Wisconsin Statutes section 101.862 and Wisconsin Administrative Code SPS section 305.40:

- **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 DSPS.**
- **No person may install, repair, or maintain electrical wiring unless the person is licensed as an electrician by the DSPS or unless the person is registered as a beginning electrician by the DSPS.** The licensing requirement applies to master electricians, residential master electricians, journeyman electricians, industrial journeyman electricians, and residential journeyman electricians. The registration requirement applies to beginning electricians, electrical apprentices, industrial electrical apprentices, and residential electrical apprentices.

However, there are several exceptions to these requirements. For example, someone who maintains or repairs electrical wiring within his/her owned or leased facility—or within a facility for which the person is an agent—is exempt from the license and registration requirements. This exemption does not apply to someone who installs electrical wiring. As the DSPS explains, "new lights to be installed in [a] new foundry addition shall be by a licensed electrician. Replacing existing light fixtures, lamps, or ballasts in [an] existing factory does not require a license." Licensing of Electricians and Electrical Contractor Questions (Mar. 13, 2013). Although licensed electricians must perform virtually all installation work, another exception to the licensing requirement may apply if a person installs (or repairs or maintains) manufactured equipment or manufactured systems that are not primarily electrical in nature, as long as the task does not involve modification or installation of the conductors beyond the disconnecting point, or beyond the last junction, pull, or device box.

The law also states that **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 person's work.** Specific supervisory requirements

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depend on the location of the work and the categorization of the electricians involved. Moreover, there are directions for the proportion of beginning, journeyman, and master electricians working on an electrical wiring project.

Before electricians or other staff members perform electrical work, they and their employers should carefully consider: whether the planned work constitutes installation, repair or maintenance; whether they qualify for an exemption from the licensing/registration requirements; and what supervisory requirements apply.

Finally, although Wisconsin is not the only state with a licensing or registration provision, the particular requirements vary from state to state. Some states decline to regulate the matter on a statewide level, instead leaving the matter to local governmental entities.

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