
SENATE COMMITTEE ON LABOR, PUBLIC EMPLOYMENT AND RETIREMENT
Senator Lola Smallwood-Cuevas, Chair
2025 - 2026 Regular

Bill No:	AB 1707	Hearing Date:	July 1, 2026
Author:	Davies		
Version:	February 4, 2026		
Urgency:	No	Fiscal:	Yes
Consultant:	Emma Bruce		

SUBJECT: Electricians: certification application, examination, and renewal

KEY ISSUE

This bill modernizes the Division of Labor Standards Enforcement's (DLSE) certification process for electricians. Specifically, this bill requires DLSE to accept online applications for certification and renewal and authorizes an individual who fails the electrician certification examination to reregister and retake the examination again immediately at the next available appointment.

ANALYSIS

Existing law:

- 1) Establishes within the Department of Industrial Relations various entities including the Division of Labor Standards Enforcement (DLSE) under the direction of the Labor Commissioner (LC) and empowers the LC to ensure a just day's pay in every workplace and to promote justice through robust enforcement of labor laws. (Labor Code §79-107)
- 2) Requires DLSE to maintain minimum standards for the competency and training of electricians through a system of testing and certification. (Labor Code §108)
- 3) Requires DLSE to maintain separate certifications for general electrician, fire/life safety technician, residential electrician, voice data video technician, and nonresidential lighting technician. (Labor Code §108.2(c))
- 4) Requires DLSE to maintain an electrical certification curriculum committee comprised of representatives of the State Department of Education, the California Community Colleges, and the division to, among other things, establish written educational curriculum standards for enrollees in training programs. (Labor Code §108)
- 5) Requires individuals who perform work as electricians to become certified pursuant to 2) above. (Labor Code §108.2(a))
- 6) Provides that certification is required only for those persons who perform work as electricians for contractors licensed as class C-10 electrical contractors under the Contractors State License Board (CSLB) Rules and Regulations. (Labor Code §108.2(b)(1))
- 7) Requires individuals desiring to be certified to submit to the DLSE an application for certification and examination that includes an employment history report from the Social Security Administration. (Labor Code §108.2(b)(4))

- 8) Defines “electricians” as all persons who engage in the connection of electrical devices for entities classified as electrical contractors in the CSLB Rules and Regulations. (Labor Code §108(c))

This bill:

- 1) Requires DLSE to accept electronic applications for certification and examination as an electrician.
- 2) Requires DLSE to allow electricians to renew their certifications electronically.
- 3) Authorizes an individual who fails the electrician certification examination to reregister for certification and retake the examination again immediately at the next available appointment with DLSE.

COMMENTS

1. Background:

Electricians in California are licensed and certified by two main state agencies: DLSE for individual electrician certification, and the Contractors State License Board (CSLB) for the C-10 Electrical Contractor license. The C-10 license is required for a business to bid on jobs totaling \$500 or more.

Individual certification through DLSE is required for those who perform electrical work for C-10 contractors. DLSE maintains separate certifications for general, residential, fire/life/safety, non-residential lighting, and voice-data-video technicians. Certification requires 4,800-8,000 hours of experience depending on the type of certification, plus a passing score on the state exam.

To apply for the exam, an applicant must mail an application and a check or money order for \$175 (\$100 exam fee and \$75 administration fee) to DLSE. Additionally, the application must include a Social Security Administration employment history report and documentation of training hours. Once approved, DLSE sends the applicant an eligibility notice and the applicant can then schedule their exam. There are 22 test sites across the state. The number of questions and the length of the exam vary depending on the type of certification.

Applicants receive their results immediately upon completion of the exam. A minimum score of 70% is required to pass. DLSE mails a certification card to those who pass within two weeks of the exam date. Applicants who fail have a 60-day waiting period before they can retake the exam. They are also required to submit a retest application form and \$100 for each retest.

Electricians must renew their certification every three years by mailing an application and check or money order for \$100 to DLSE. Renewal is contingent upon completion of 32 hours of approved continuing education and proof of at least 2,000 hours of work experience in the industry during that three-year period. Electricians can renew up to one year prior to their certification’s expiration date as long as their 32 hours of continuing education is completed.

Since 2009, the CSLB and DLSE have been responsible for enforcing the electrician certification law. Electricians found working without a valid certification are prohibited from taking the test for a period of seven years.

2. Need for this bill?

According to the author:

“California is currently facing a critical shortage of skilled electricians to meet its ambitious clean energy and housing goals. However, the current certification process is bogged down by three key issues:

Paper-Heavy Processing: Manual mailing of applications and checks leads to significant administrative delays and "lost in the mail" scenarios.

Renewal Lag: Electricians often face gaps in their legal ability to work while waiting for paper renewals to be processed.

Arbitrary Waiting Periods: Currently, applicants who fail the certification exam must wait a mandatory period (often 60 days) before retesting, regardless of their readiness or the availability of testing centers.

AB 1707 aims to modernize California’s electrician certification process by transitioning from archaic paper-based systems to a fully digital platform.”

3. Proponent Arguments:

The National Electrical Contractors Association supports the measure, arguing:

“California relies on a highly skilled and properly certified electrical workforce to safely construct, maintain, and modernize the state’s critical infrastructure, buildings, and energy systems. The electrician certification program administered by the Department of Industrial Relations plays a vital role in ensuring that individuals performing electrical work meet appropriate competency and safety standards.

AB 1707 provides common-sense administrative updates that improve the efficiency and accessibility of the certification process without weakening existing requirements. Specifically, the bill authorizes the Division of Labor Standards Enforcement to accept electronic applications and renewals and allows applicants who do not pass the certification exam to re-register and retake the exam at the next available testing opportunity.

AB 1707 strikes the appropriate balance between maintaining rigorous certification standards and modernizing the processes that support them. It is a targeted, cost-effective reform that improves efficiency, supports workforce development, and enhances the state’s ability to meet its construction and energy goals.”

4. Opponent Arguments:

None received.

5. Prior Legislation:

SB 1362 (Margett, Chapter 716, Statutes of 2008) authorized specified disciplinary action for failure to comply with existing law related to the certification of electricians.

SB 1038 (Committee on Budget and Fiscal Review, Chapter 46, Statutes of 2012) among other things, recast the electrician certification responsibilities of the Division of Apprenticeship Standards under DLSE.

SUPPORT

American Subcontractors Association-California
Associated Builders and Contractors of California
California State Association of Electrical Workers
IBEW Local Union 569
National Electrical Contractors Association
Western Electrical Contractors Association

OPPOSITION

None received

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