



LARA / CONSTRUCTION CODES

New Skilled Trades Law Streamlines Licensing, Protects Consumers

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April 4, 2017 - Regulations for five skilled trade industries have been consolidated to create one uniform code under the new Skilled Trades Regulation Act (STRA) that takes effect today. Gov. Rick Snyder signed the legislation that provides streamlined and consistent application, testing, and renewal processes for skilled trades licensees, and uniform enforcement provisions at the highest safety standards to protect consumers. LARA's Bureau of Construction Codes (BCC) is responsible for administering the new Act.

"The new Skilled Trades law complements efforts toward attracting and retaining a strong skilled trades workforce, along with protecting consumers by helping ensure projects are done by licensed workers," said BCC Director Keith Lambert. "With thousands of skilled trade jobs currently unfilled in Michigan, the uniform standards set by STRA are intended to remove barriers for Michiganders to start a career in the skilled trades industry."

Modeled after the Occupational Code, the law creates uniformity in regulations for those working in electrical, plumbing, mechanical, boilers, and building officials and inspectors. These workers will now find it much easier to apply for or renew their licenses – especially those who hold multiple licenses. Previously these licenses were issued under separate laws. Individuals who currently hold a license, registration, or certification issued under the old laws before today's effective date, will maintain their credential(s) until their next renewal date. Specific licensure requirements for individual trades have largely remained unchanged.

Increased consumer protection is built into the law by giving LARA greater authority over complaints of unlicensed activity and stipulates new penalties for unlicensed activity:

- 1st violation is misdemeanor – fine of no more than \$500 or/and imprisonment for no more than 90 days
- 2nd violation is misdemeanor – fine of no more than \$1,000 or/and imprisonment for no more than 1 year
- 3rd violation is felony – fine of no more than \$25,000 or/and imprisonment for no more than 5 years

Language in the law continues to support LARA's commitment to recognizing military service and experience for licensure by eliminating barriers for military servicemen and women to become licensed. Skilled tradespeople returning from active duty in the Armed Forces will be provided a temporary exemption from the renewal license fee and continuing education requirements. For military veterans honorably discharged, LARA will continue to waive an initial skilled trade license or registration.

STRA is based on guidelines from the Michigan Occupational Safety and Health Act and the state's Public Health Code. It replaces the Electrical Administrative Act, the Forbes Mechanical Contractors Act, the Boiler Act, the Building Officials and Inspectors Registration Act, and the State Plumbing Act. LARA's Bureau of Construction Codes and Office of Policy and Legislative Affairs worked closely with the state legislature on the passage of STRA.

To visit the Bureau of Construction Codes website, go to: www.michigan.gov/bcc

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