



# State Board of Examiners of Plumbing, Heating & Fire Sprinkler Contractors

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## What Happens When A Bill Becomes Law

OR

## What Does Bill 395 Mean To Licensees

Sandra O'Brien—Executive Director

Governor Easley recently signed into law S395 that directly impacts all the licensees of our Board. Some of the bill was merely clean-up language but other parts of it are important changes that will be put into place this year.

### FEES

- Sets the annual license fee at **\$100.00** and the exam fee at \$80.00 until a permanent rule change increases it.
- Eliminates the current annual license fee structure and replaces it with a higher cap of \$150.00. We do not expect to reach the cap for quite some time.
- Increases the exam fee cap from

\$50.00 to \$150.00 both the application and the exam fee shall be retained by the Board whether or not a license is granted.

- Eliminates the \$45.00 local limited license for populations under 10,000.

### SYSTEMS

- Systems installed in a single-family residence are a part of "heating, group number three (H-3, class I and II)" regardless of system size.
- Expands "H-3, class I to include **cooling systems** that have a mechanical refrigeration capacity of 15 tons or less.

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## Continuing Education by Bill Tomlinson

As Director of Education I am happy to call your attention to the large number of educational classes being made available in this newsletter and on our web site for this upcoming fall and early winter.

I have previously notified you of our educational requirements and the amount of time available before the 2003 renewal and enforcement date. Many of you still have not come forth and started fulfilling your educational requirements for the 2003 renewal period. I am sure that some of you are putting off to the last minute your attempts to get your classes. Please do not wait until the last few months of 2002 and seek classes to satisfy your requirements. We have absolutely no way of knowing how many classes will be available.

The Board limits the number of licensees who can attend a class to 100 people. It is easy to see that as we draw near the deadline with large numbers needing hours, it will be impossible for those remaining licensees to get classes so as to qualify for the 2003 renewal cycle.

Each licensee should understand that any failure on your part to get your CE hours in a timely fashion will be handled in a manner prescribed by the Board and made known to you in more detail later. Any excuse such as "the classes were filled" will surely fall on deaf ears.

Also, I've heard that many contractors are waiting for courses to go on-line. Let me say again there will be no on-line credited classes.

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### REMEMBER:

- You have until 2003 to get your 6 CE hours.
- Hundreds of courses will be offered around the state.
- Check your CE hours online through the "online register" at [www.nclicensng.org](http://www.nclicensng.org)

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#### FUEL PIPING

- Fuel piping license now **covers inside of building.**

#### EXAM

- Must be at least 18 years old and “of good moral character” before they are allowed to take the appropriate occupational exam. Under OSHA regulations no one under 18 is suppose to be involved in this type of work.
- Exams will be held throughout the year at computer testing centers around the state.
- No more special oral examinations.
- The majority of exams will be approved or denied within 30 days of applying.
- A license shall be issued after an applicant passes the exam and pays the appropriate fee.  
**License fees will no longer be collected up front.**

- Applicant who fail the exam will now only have to wait 90 days before they can retake the exam.
- Applicants who fail the exam three times will be directed by the Board to take additional education courses before they are allowed to retake the test.

#### RENEWAL

- Renewal notification can be by mail or e-mail if the licensee so chooses.
- Board can hold a license until all unpaid annual fees are submitted to the Board.
- The late fee will be a flat \$25.00 charge.

#### EXPIRED LICENSE

- When renewing an expired license the licensee will be charged for all unpaid past years fees.
- Licensee will be responsible for continuing education at time of renewal.

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#### **Continuing Education:** continued from page 1

No classes will be accepted that are not previously approved by the Board as already stated in prior newsletters.

Among our licensees are many plumbing and heating inspectors who voluntarily take code update courses through the Department of Insurance. This office has received numerous calls and letters from inspector licensees seeking to count those hours taken at seminars other than those approved by our Board. No credit will be given for any courses or hours not pre-approved as required by the Board rules and regulations.

We have many licensees who hold dual qualifications, i.e. plumbing, heating architects, and plumbing, heating engineers, and plumbing, heating electricians, as well as plumbing, heating inspectors. This Board looks on all of these as

licensees of the Board and, as stated previously, only accepts pre-approved courses as required by the continuing education rules.

Again, progress is being made with our classes both in number, location, and content wise. Already, several class sessions have been monitored as required by the Board and to be honest several have fallen short of the expectations promised in the class outline.

Steps are being taken to improve these classes. Failure to make significant improvement on the Providers' part will result in the termination of those courses.

Finally, allow me to thank you for your support now and in the future, as the Board works to improve the skills and knowledge of you the licensee.

### **SPECIAL NOTICE TO ALL LICENSEES**

The Board has been receiving, for some time now, phone calls from licensees about Home Depot and Lowe's moving into the Heating and Air Conditioning business. Communications with Home Depot has been going on and off for several months now and at the present no solid understanding has been reached about how they will “retail” equipment, recommend a licensed contractor, finalize financing, or to the stipulations of a signed contract.

Each licensee who plans to participate in this program needs to understand that he/she, the licensee of record, will be liable, by signing, for any contract that he/she assumes responsibility over. There may be other retailers who have concerns and desires to participate in this type of working arrangement but at the present time our dealings with Home Depot and Lowe's indicate, to us, they have a desire and willingness to protect the public safety, health, and welfare of consumers.