

Department of Legislative Services  
Maryland General Assembly  
2012 Session

**FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE**

**Revised**

House Bill 10

(Delegate Haddaway-Riccio)

Economic Matters

Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

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**Business Occupations - Electrical Inspectors - Master Electrician License  
Required**

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This bill requires a county or a municipal corporation to employ as electrical inspectors only individuals who hold, or have held within the last five years, a State or local master electrician license that was not suspended or revoked. A county or municipal corporation is exempt from the bill's requirements if it uses combination building code inspectors to conduct concurrent trade specific inspections on residential or commercial buildings to determine compliance with adopted electrical and building codes, or if it conducts electrical code inspections under the supervision of a licensed master electrician. This requirement applies only to electrical inspectors hired after the bill's effective date.

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**Fiscal Summary**

**State Effect:** None. The bill applies only to local governments.

**Local Effect:** Potential increase in local government expenditures for electrical inspector salaries to the extent that a county or municipal government does not currently employ licensed master electricians as inspectors and does not meet either exemption criteria. Corresponding permit fees (and revenues) may also increase in affected counties to offset increased expenditures. **This bill may impose a mandate on a unit of local government.**

**Small Business Effect:** None.

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## Analysis

### **Current Law:**

#### *The Maryland Master Electricians Act*

The State Board of Master Electricians in the Department of Labor, Licensing, and Regulation issues master electrician licenses to qualified individuals under the Maryland Master Electricians Act. Each county is required to adopt licensing qualifications comparable to or more stringent than specified State qualifications or require a State license. In a local jurisdiction that requires a local license, the State license serves only as a mechanism for obtaining reciprocal licenses in other local jurisdictions. In the two jurisdictions that do not have local licensing requirements, Garrett and Allegany counties, an electrician must have a State license to provide electrical services as a master electrician.

#### *Licensing Requirements*

To obtain a State license as a master electrician, the applicant must have seven years of experience providing electrical services for all types of electrical equipment and apparatus, under the supervision of a master electrician or a similarly qualified employee of a governmental unit. With the board's approval, the applicant may count up to three years of formal education and training toward the experience requirement. All applicants, except those seeking inactive status, must maintain general liability insurance of at least \$300,000 and property damage insurance of at least \$100,000.

#### *Electrical Inspectors*

An individual must place his or her State master electrician license on inactive status and is prohibited from having any financial interest in any electrical business for the duration of employment as an electrical inspector. The board may issue an electrical inspector identification card to an electrical inspector who has placed the State license on inactive status. When employment is terminated, the board must reactivate the State master electrician license, if applicable, without reexamination.

### **Background:**

#### *Permit Offices and Electrical Inspectors*

Statute requires local jurisdictions to enforce licensing requirements. The local policing of the electrical profession primarily occurs through locally issued permits and locally conducted inspections. Every jurisdiction in Maryland has a building permit office that is

generally separate from the local licensing board. Not all jurisdictions perform their own inspections, however. Economies of scale result in many smaller jurisdictions contracting out the inspection function. Allegany County, for example, does not have an electrical board but does have a permit office, and the inspections are contracted out to two separate companies.

The primary function of a permit office is to issue a permit that gives the right to perform specific electrical work on a designated site or project. The permit office sends an inspector to each ongoing project to ensure that work on the project complies with applicable building and electrical codes. Noncompliance with electrical standards is normally addressed between the inspector and the licensed electrician, who is expected to bring the project up to code. If the electrician does not remedy the problem, the inspector may report the violation to the local licensing board. A citation may also be issued.

**Local Fiscal Effect:** Inspection of residential and commercial electrical work is almost exclusively within the purview of county or municipal governments. The exact number of electrical inspectors employed by local jurisdictions is unknown at this time; however, local fiscal effects will vary based on whether or not county or municipal governments currently employ master electricians as electrical inspectors and are otherwise not exempt from the bill. The Maryland Building Officials Association advises that most jurisdictions already require inspectors to be licensed master electricians. However, some counties use combination inspectors who are licensed by the International Code Council (ICC).

Even if a county does not employ master electricians as electrical inspectors, a county may still meet one of the bill's exemptions. For example, Anne Arundel County requires combination inspectors who perform final residential electrical inspections to hold *either* a State master electrician license *or* certification from ICC. Currently, all county inspectors hold ICC certification but not State licenses. Montgomery County also employs combination building code inspectors on residential buildings.

Legislative Services advises that, because the bill applies prospectively, the impact is phased in as attrition occurs and replacement inspectors must meet the bill's licensing standard.

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### **Additional Information**

**Prior Introductions:** None.

**Cross File:** None.

**Information Source(s):** Department of Labor, Licensing, and Regulation; Department of General Services; Maryland Association of Counties; Maryland Municipal League; Maryland Building Officials Association; Anne Arundel and Montgomery counties; cities of Bowie and Takoma Park; Department of Legislative Services

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - January 13, 2012  
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