

BILL ANALYSIS

H.B. 1758
By: Thompson
Licensing & Administrative Procedures
Committee Report (Amended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

The Texas State Board of Plumbing Examiners issues licenses to tradesman, journeyman, and master plumbers in Texas and also registers apprentice plumbers. To sit for the examination required to receive a plumber's license, an apprentice plumber must demonstrate that he or she has 4,000 hours of work experience. Because it takes a long time to accumulate that many hours of experience, some apprentice plumbers may be discouraged from applying for and receiving a plumber's license, even though the occupation is in demand in Texas.

H.B. 1758 allows an apprentice plumber applying for a plumber's license to use up to 1,000 hours of classroom training as a credit toward the total hours of work experience required to sit for the tradesman or journeyman plumber's license examination. The classroom training must be obtained from a training program approved by the U.S. Department of Labor or by a person approved by the board and be based on board-approved materials. The bill also allows an apprentice to sit for a license examination if he or she has received an associate of applied science degree from a plumbing technology program that includes on-the-job training.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, department, agency, or institution.

ANALYSIS

H.B. 1758 amends the Occupations Code to require an applicant for a journeyman plumber or tradesman plumber-limited license, before taking the license examination, to complete classroom training provided by an instructor approved by the Texas State Board of Plumbing Examiners in a board-approved training program in the areas of health and safety, applicable plumbing codes, and water conservation for at least 24 hours if the applicant is applying to take a tradesman plumber-limited license holder examination or at least 48 hours if the applicant is applying to take a journeyman plumber examination. The bill authorizes the board, at the applicant's request, to credit the applicant with up to 1,000 hours of the work experience required before taking an examination if the applicant has completed the classroom portion of a training program approved by the U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Apprenticeship, or provided by a person approved by the board and based on board-approved course materials. The bill authorizes a plumber's apprentice to apply for and take an examination for a journeyman plumber or tradesman plumber-limited license if the apprentice has received an associate of applied science degree from a plumbing technology program that includes a combination of classroom and on-the-job training and is approved by the board and the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. The bill authorizes a plumber's apprentice who is enrolled in good standing in a training program approved by the U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Apprenticeship, to take an examination without completing the required classroom training.

EFFECTIVE DATE

September 1, 2009.

EXPLANATION OF AMENDMENTS

Committee Amendment No. 1:

H.B. 1758 is amended to decrease from 1,000 to 500 the maximum hours of work experience the Texas State Board of Plumbing Examiners is authorized to credit an applicant for a journeyman plumber or tradesman plumber-limited license who has completed the classroom portion of a training program approved by the U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Apprenticeship, or provided by a person approved by the board and based on board-approved course materials.