

**CITY COUNCIL COMMUNICATION 98-010  
JANUARY 5, 1998 AGENDA**

**SUBJECT:**

**PROPOSED CHANGES TO CHAPTER 8,  
MUNICIPAL CODE– ELECTRICAL  
CONTRACTOR LICENSING PROCESS**

**SUBMITTED BY:**

**JAMES GRANT  
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR**

**SYNOPSIS –**

Proposed changes to Chapter 8 of the Municipal Code (Building Construction Codes), specifically subchapter two (Electrical Code).

The Electrical Examining Board reviewed these code changes at public meetings on June 24, 1997 and August 5, 1997. There were no objections received or anticipated in adopting these suggested changes.

**FISCAL IMPACT –**

N/A

**RECOMMENDATION –**

**Approval.**

**BACKGROUND –**

This last fall the City Council received communications from several electrical contractors concerned that the present electrical ordinance does not qualify apprentice electricians effectively. The present ordinance only requires an apprentice to register with the office of the building official. They are limited to do work only under the direct supervision from a certified master or journeyman electrician. A few larger contractors indicated that apprentices should also be registered in a recognized apprentice training program. The Board discussed this matter at two public meetings. Notices were sent to all licensed and certified electricians. As a result of hearing

from a majority of the participants who objected to these recommendations, the Board decided this would be too much of a burden on the small contractor and there should be some means to allow individuals to receive their training by exclusively “ on the job training” .

These proposed changes are recommended by the Electrical Board of Examiners and include four parts:

**Part (a)** modifies section 8-84.01. Presently the Municipal Code restricts the Board from recognizing an individual that has had experience outside the state of Iowa who may be qualified and certified in a similar manner as required by the City of Des Moines. The Electrical Board requests that this language be deleted from this section.

**Part (b)** adds a third exception to section 8-84.01, which, if adopted, would allow the Board to recognize individuals who demonstrate that they have had a minimum of six years experience in the electrical trade in lieu of having to serve as a journeyman electrician for two years.

Approximately one year ago the City modified the method of certifying electricians by creating a journeyman and master classification. By doing so, this qualified the individuals who were actually doing the work out in the field; however, we failed to recognize that there would be a window of time that some individuals would not qualify as master electricians.

Presently, to become a master electrician you must either have had to be a licensed contractor prior to the adoption of this ordinance, or had a journeyman certificate for a minimum of two years. As the journeyman classification is new, this in essence has restricted some certified journeyman who have a great deal of experience and been able to pass the required examination from moving up to the master class for two years.

The Electrical Board presently has several individuals that meet the conditions of this suggested change. Considering an individual must hold a master electrician’ s certificate of competency to become a licensed contractor, by withholding this change is restricting these individuals from going into business for themselves. The Electrical Board and the Permit and Development Center respectfully request that the City Council waive the three readings for this ordinance change. By doing so, this will allow the Electrical Board and the Community Development Department to issue Master Electrician Certificates to individuals who have already passed their examinations and have considerable experience in the electrical installation field.

**Part (c)** includes a change to section 8-84.02(b). This section presently allows an individual who has a minimum of two years of training and two years of work experience to qualify as a journeyman electrician, if they pass their examination. The Electrical Board is requesting a change to this section to further clarify the degree and type of training required.

**Part (d)** adds an item (e) to section 8-118, which will allow electrical service risers to be of schedule 40 PVC when not subject to physical damage. The National Electrical Code allows this product for this specific application. This appears to be a safe, reasonable, and cost-effective product for electrical service entrances.