

# Legislative Analysis



## **RATIO FOR APPRENTICE ELECTRICIANS ON JOB SITE**

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**Senate Bill 895 (S-2) as reported from House committee**

**Sponsor: Sen. John Cherry**

**House Committee: Labor**

**Senate Committee: Labor [Discharged]**

**Complete to 12-5-24**

Analysis available at  
<http://www.legislature.mi.gov>

### **SUMMARY:**

Senate Bill 895 would amend the Skilled Trades Regulation Act to modify the required ratio of electrical journeyman or master electrician to apprentice from one-to-three to one-to-one and to hold contractors and certain master electricians jointly responsible for ensuring compliance with electrical wiring and equipment standards.

Currently under the act, there must be at least one electrical journeyman or master electrician for every three registered apprentice electricians. The Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs (LARA) or an enforcing agency (the governmental agency that, in accordance with the Stille-DeRossett-Hale Single State Construction Code Act, is responsible for administration and enforcement of the State Construction Code within a county, city, village, or township) is responsible for enforcing this ratio on a jobsite basis.

Under Senate Bill 895, the ratio would be one electrical journeyman or master electrician to not more than one registered apprentice.

A person in violation of the ratio would be subject to a \$5,000 administrative fine for a first violation, a \$10,000 administrative fine for a second violation, and a minimum 90 day's suspension of their master electrician's license for a third violation. After 90 days, the license could be reinstated if the person passes a master electrician examination.

If the violator is an electrical contractor, the contractor would be subject to the fine or license suspension. If the violator is a master electrician who is employed by an electrical contractor and is actively in charge of and responsible for compliance with the Michigan Electrical Code for all installations of electrical wiring and equipment for that contractor, then both that individual and the contractor would be subject to the fine or license suspension.

LARA would have to pay any money collected for a fine to the enforcing agency that discovered the violation. If LARA issues an order for a violation, it would be entitled to actual costs and attorney fees related to the investigation and adjudication of the violation.

Senate Bill 895 would additionally provide that if an electrical contractor's license is issued to a contractor who employs at least one full-time master electrician to be in charge of compliance with the Michigan Electrical Code, then the electrical contractor and master electrician would be jointly and severally responsible for the supervision or control of all electrical wiring operations necessary to secure compliance with Article 7 (Electricians and Electrical Contractors) of the Skilled Trades Regulation Act and all other laws and rules related to the installation of electrical wiring and equipment. If that master electrician ceases to be employed

by the contractor, the contractor would have to employ another master electrician to fulfill those responsibilities within 30 days and notify LARA in writing of the change.

Finally, the bill would amend the definitions of *apprentice electrician* and *fire alarm specialty apprentice technician* to provide that those individuals are engaged in learning about and assisting in their respective fields under direct, *on-site, in-person* supervision by, as applicable, an electrical journeyman or master electrician or a fire alarm specialty technician.<sup>1</sup>

MCL 339.5701 et seq.

## **BACKGROUND:**

2016 PA 73 increased the required ratio of electrical journeyman or master electrician to apprentice from one-to-one to one-to-three.

## **BRIEF DISCUSSION:**

Supporters argue that restoring the one-to-one ratio would improve the quality and safety of electrical projects by ensuring that apprentices are properly trained by experienced professionals, which is necessary given the dangerous conditions electricians face at work. They suggest that SB 895 would help apprentices pass their licensing exam faster, since increased supervision from electrical journeymen or master electricians would provide more valuable learning opportunities and the bill's provisions to hold contractors and master electricians responsible for compliance would ensure that apprentices are properly registered and able to get their hours certified.<sup>2</sup> Proponents believe that with the current number of journey electricians in the field and with more apprentices able to become licensed on a shorter timeline, the proposed ratio could be fulfilled without contributing to staffing shortages.

No arguments opposing the bill were presented during committee testimony, but concerns were raised about whether the bill would limit job opportunities for new apprentices and whether increasing the number of journey or master electricians per apprentice would have a tangible impact on worker safety.

## **FISCAL IMPACT:**

Senate Bill 895 would have an indeterminate fiscal impact on state and local government units. The Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs and local agencies that enforce the Skilled Trades Regulation Act would likely receive increased revenues from collected violation fines. The amount of the increase would depend on the number of violations, and the impact on a specific agency would depend on how many violations the agency discovers. The bill would likely require additional enforcement costs as well, which would depend on the volume of complaints and investigations.

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<sup>1</sup> Currently, apprentices are under the direct, personal supervision of those individuals.

<sup>2</sup> To be eligible to take the examination to become licensed as an electrical journeyman in Michigan, an individual must obtain at least 8,000 hours of practical experience over a period of at least four years.

## POSITIONS:

Representatives of the IBEW Michigan State Conference testified in support of the bill.  
(11-14-24)

The following entities indicated support for the bill (11-14-24):

- IBEW Local 58
- Lansing City Council
- Michigan Building Trades
- Michigan Nurses Association
- Michigan Pipe Trades
- National Electrical Contractors Association
- United Association (UA)
- UA Local 333
- United Food and Commercial Workers Local 876

The following entities indicated opposition to the bill (11-14-24):

- Associated Builders and Contractors of Michigan
- Grand Rapids Chamber
- Home Builders Association of Michigan
- Lake Michigan College
- Michigan Chamber of Commerce
- Michigan Energy Innovation Business Council
- Michigan Manufacturers Association
- National Federation of Independent Business
- Small Business Association of Michigan

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■ This analysis was prepared by nonpartisan House Fiscal Agency staff for use by House members in their deliberations and does not constitute an official statement of legislative intent.