

Mendoza Law Office, LLC

MINNESOTA CABLE COMMUNICATIONS ASSOCIATION

2011 ANNUAL MEETING

LICENSING, TESTING AND THE BOARD OF ELECTRICITY

ANSWERS TO FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

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Q. Which state agency is responsible for licensing of power limited electricians?

A. The Minnesota Board of Electricity establishes the regulations for electrical licensing. The Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry (DOLI) administers the licensing program (accepts and processes licensing forms, conducts testing, issues and revokes licenses, license enforcement responsibility).

Q. Is a license always required in order to do power limited electric work in Minnesota?

A. No. However, if you are not a licensed electrician, you can only perform electrical work in Minnesota if you are registered with the Minnesota DOLI. Once registered, you must complete 2 hours of continuing education each year and renew the registration annually. Only employees who work on the load side, or point of entrance of a cable communications system are required to be registered.

Q. How does a PLT get licensed?

A. To obtain a PLT license, applicants must either be a graduate of a four-year electrical course offered by an accredited university, or have at least 36 months experience "acceptable to the board" of working with power limited systems. Those persons demonstrating they meet these qualifications on a personal license application form are allowed to sit for a licensing examination. If the applicant passes the examination, a license is issued. PLT licenses have a term of two (2) years. To renew a PLT license, the licensee must complete sixteen (16) hours of continuing education during the license term.

Experience "acceptable to the board" for a PLT license is defined under the Board's rules as follows:

- i. Experience while in the employ of a licensed contractor;
- ii. Experience while working for an employer exempt from licensing as a contractor if the work is inspected pursuant to Minn. Stat. Section 326B.36 and done under the supervision of a licensed electrician;
- iii. If the experience is gained while working for an exempt employer and the work is exempt from inspection requirements or done on federal property by a federal employee, the experience will be acceptable to the board if the experience is substantially equal to that acquired while under the employ of a licensed contractor, and the work is personally inspected by the department on the premises where the applicable work was performed;
- iv. Experience while working outside of Minnesota that the board has determined is substantially equivalent to work performed while in the employ of a licensed contractor in Minnesota. The board's determination will be made based on a certification by the employer as to the work performed.

iv. Experience while performing work in the armed forces which the Board has determined is substantially equivalent to work while in the employ of a licensed contractor in Minnesota. The Board's determination will be made based on a certification by the military as to the work performed.

Board rules set forth the minimum experience requirements and maximum experience allowances for PLTs. The chart below summarizes these requirements.

<u>Activity</u>	<u>Minimum Required Experience</u>	<u>Maximum Allowable Experience Credit</u>
Planning for the installation of technology circuits or systems	None required	6 months
Supervising the installation of technology circuits or systems	None required	6 months
Wiring for and installing technology circuits or systems	12 months	36 months
Maintaining and repairing technology circuits or systems	None required	24 months
Experience gained working as a minor	N/A	Experience gained before age of 17 is not allowed for credit.
Experience gained in foreign countries	N/A	12 months
Experience acquired during school in DOLI approved, post-high school electrical course and other department-approved courses requiring daily, full-time attendance	N/A	No maximum restriction
Experience acquired during school for DOLI-approved part-time or night school courses.	N/A	No maximum restriction.
Successful completion of a two-year post high	N/A	2,000 hours/12 months

school electrical course or other technical training approved by the Board of Electricity.		
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Minimum Required Experience and Maximum Allowable Experience Credit for Power Limited Technicians. Source: Minnesota Rules 3800.3520, Subp. 5(I) (2008)

For PLT license renewals, the Board of Electricity rules require four (4) of the sixteen (16) hours of continuing education to be on the National Electric Code (Code) with the remainder on statutes and rules governing electrical installations or technical topics related to electrical installations and equipment. Experience credit for electrical work performed in Minnesota after January 1, 2008 will not be granted if the applicant is not registered or is not licensed by the department.

Q. Are there supervisory requirements for unlicensed PLTs?

A. Most cable companies are licensed "technology systems contractors." As such, a cable company needs only one (1) licensed PLT to supervise its unlicensed registered individuals in Minnesota.

Employees of licensed "technology systems contractors" are not required to hold an electric license for the planning, laying out, installing, altering, and repairing of technology circuits or systems except planning, laying out, or installing:

- (1) in other than residential dwellings, class 2 or class 3 remote control circuits that control circuits or systems other than class 2 or class 3, except circuits that interconnect these systems through communication, alarm, and security systems are exempted from this paragraph;
- (2) class 2 or class 3 circuits in electrical cabinets, enclosures, or devices containing physically unprotected circuits other than class 2 or class 3; or
- (3) technology circuits or systems in hazardous classified locations as covered by chapter 5 of the National Electrical Code.

Minn. Stat. §326B.33, Subd. 21(b).

The stricter supervisory ratio requirements contained in Minn. Stat. § 326B.33, Subd. 12(a) do not apply to cable operators because the work being performed by unlicensed individuals is not "electrical work required to be performed by a licensed individual" under Minn. Stat. § 326B.33, Subd. 21(b).

Q. How long does it take to get an unlicensed PLT licensed?

A: Assuming the unlicensed individual meets the qualifications to sit for a licensing examination described above, it can take as little as four (4) weeks or as long as ten (10)

weeks for the licensing application to be processed, an exam to be scheduled, the exam to be scored, and a license to be issued, depending on the volume of applications at any given time.

Time required for processing the license application depends on how long it takes for DOLI to confirm the work and experience history of the applicant provided on the application form. If references provided do not respond to DOLI in a timely manner, the licensing process can drag out even longer than ten (10) weeks.

Once the license application is filed, statute requires an exam to be scheduled within sixty (60) days. The DOLI Licensing Examination Guide states that exam results are generally mailed within one week. DOLI representatives have stated that it takes approximately one week for a license to be issued once an applicant has been notified they passed the exam.

Q. For continuing education training, does the trainer have to have specific qualifications in order to meet the new standard?

A: Yes. All educational programs must be conducted by department-approved instructors who have the qualifications described in at least one of the following items:

- a personal electrical license and at least four years' experience in electrical inspection, electrical installations, or teaching subjects within the scope of electrical work permitted by the instructor's license;
- a registered or licensed electrical engineer with at least four years' experience in the design of premises electrical power systems or technology systems;
- at least five years' practical experience in the subject being taught. An instructor in this category may only be approved for instruction on technical topics related to electrical installations and equipment; or
- for technology systems, an instructor certified by a national training program.

Q. Can continuing education requirements be provided in-house?

A. Yes, however the requirements for certifying in-house continuing education courses are rather burdensome. MCCA has been working to make it easier for companies to offer in-house continuing education classes.