

Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development  
Division of Labor Standards and Safety  
Mechanical Inspection

2019-2020 Proposed MI Regulations Explained

**1. 8 AAC 63.010 Minimum Plumbing Standards P. 1-2 (repeal/readopt)**

This section updates the state plumbing code by adopting minimum plumbing standards to the applicable sections of the 2018 Uniform Plumbing Code as established by the International Association of Plumbing and Mechanical Officials (IAPMO) code council. The revisions are simple updates to the year and code titles, with the exception of the adjustment under subsection (a)(1)(B), which excludes stand-alone fire sprinkler systems with a backflow preventer under Section 612.2 of the code.

If this adjustment to the code was not made, it could have restricted installation of stand-alone sprinkler systems for residential structures (duplex or single family) be performed only by certified plumbers. In Alaska, these systems are installed by “fire system installers” who have certifications for this type of work. The State Fire Marshall currently has oversight and would retain oversight based on the proposed code adjustment.

**2. 8 AAC 77.005 Elevator Safety Standards Code P. 2-4 (repeal/readopt)**

This section updates statewide codes for elevators and escalators, platform lifts and stairway chair lifts.

The revisions update the applicable year and code titles, with the exception of subsection (a)(1)(A)(i), which added a clarification that the “authority having jurisdiction” (i.e. the Mechanical Inspection Section) will determine when an elevator pit does not require a drain or sump pump. This was designed to resolve disputes where a building owner challenged MI’s authority to require a drain or sump pump in the elevator pit to avoid ground water accumulation.

- The department opted not to adopt the updated elevator and escalator code for existing elevators and escalators, because staff were concerned that it would create substantial cost burdens for building owners to renovate. In some cases, older elevators would have had to be replaced with a new elevator to meet the new code.

**3. 8 AAC 80.010 Boiler and Pressure Vessel Code P. 4-6 (repeal/readopt)**

- This section updates the state boiler/pressure vessel code by adopting by reference the 2014 American Petroleum Institutes’ Pressure Vessel Inspection Code.
- Paragraph (b) and (c) previously repealed in 1982 and 2006, were removed and the remaining paragraphs were renumbered.
- The MI contact address was updated in the editor’s note.

**4. 8 AAC 80.060(b) Boiler/Pressure Vessel Inspection and Stamping P. 6-7 (amended)**

Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development  
Division of Labor Standards and Safety  
Mechanical Inspection

- This section was amended to remove language requiring an identification tag issued by the department to be installed on an operating boiler until a vessel nameplate can be properly stamped. This language dates back to the origins of the boiler inspection program when there were numerous older boilers in operation that had not been properly stamped. This is no longer an issue for Alaska.
- The proposed language also updates terminology for paint marking pens.



**5. 8 AAC 070(a) Boiler/Pressure Vessel Low Water Cutoff P. 7 (amended)**

- This section adds a requirement for a manual reset for an automatic low-water fuel cutoff sensor on a boiler.
- These sensors are designed to keep the boiler from catastrophic failure, so having a manual reset forces someone to take a look and make sure the low-water issue is resolved before the fuel gets turned back on. (Some systems have automatic electronic reset features)

**6. 8 AAC 80.110 Boiler/Pressure Vessel Safety Relief Valves P. 7 (amended – add new subsection)**

- This section allows for pressure relief valve testing for boiler/pressure vessel systems at intervals consistent with national standards published by the American Petroleum Institute when the operator has a verified testing program certified under standards of the *Pressure Vessel Inspection Code*.
- This modernizes Alaska's pressure relief valve testing standard to be consistent with the national standard.

**7. 8 AAC 80.130 Boiler Operator License, 8 AAC 80.900 Definitions P. 8-14 (amended)**

These amendments update the MI office address.

**8. 8 AAC 90.130 Plumber Journeyman Cert. of Fitness P. 15-16 (repeal/readopt)**

Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development  
Division of Labor Standards and Safety  
Mechanical Inspection

This proposal maintains the current requirement that a person must be indentured in a federally registered apprentice program and acquire 8,000 hours of legally obtained work experience subject to the code in order to qualify to take the plumber journeyman exam and become a journeyman upon passing the exam.

In addition, this proposal establishes an alternate pathway to receive training performing work subject to the plumbing code that does not require participation in a federally registered apprenticeship program. Under the proposed alternate pathway, an individual would need to acquire 12,000 hours of experience as a licensed trainee doing work subject to the Uniform Plumbing Code under the direct supervision of a licensed journeyman plumber in a company properly licensed as a plumbing contractor operating under the oversight of a licensed mechanical administrator (Legally acquired experience). Upon documenting 12,000 hours of legal experience, the trainee would qualify to take the plumber journeyman exam. Upon passing the exam and paying the fee, the trainee would be issued a certificate of fitness as a licensed journeyman plumber.

This section re-establishes an on-the-job training pathway that existed prior to 2003 for employers and employees in Alaska to gain the necessary experience to qualify as a journeyman plumber upon passing a four-hour comprehensive code examination.

**The primary goal is simple: Increase training and employment opportunities for Alaskans and give employers more options to train their future workforce.**

The proposed change would put Alaskans on equal footing with non-residents who, under current regulations can “legally obtain” code work experience in another jurisdiction where federally registered apprenticeship is not mandated as the sole training opportunity.

Under current regulations, a person coming from another jurisdiction that does not require apprenticeship can qualify to take the journeyman exam after documenting 8,000 hours of plumbing code work experience, so long as that experience was gained in accordance with local laws.

The proposed regulations will require non-residents who did not receive training through a registered apprenticeship program to demonstrate that they have 12,000 hours of experience before being allowed to test and become a journeyman – It will be the same for Alaska residents and non-residents under the proposed regulations.

Based on persistent inaccurate comments, I want to clarify what this proposal does not do.

- The proposed regulations do not change federal registered apprenticeship standards.
- The proposed regulations do not change the requirement registered apprenticeship in order to qualify for the journeyman exam at 8,000 hours of code work experience.
- They do not change occupational safety and health standards, which help ensure safe and healthy work environments. The occupational safety and health standards are the same regardless of participation in registered apprenticeship.

Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development  
Division of Labor Standards and Safety  
Mechanical Inspection

- The proposed regulations do not change the current minimum ratio of journeyman to trainees under 8 AAC 90.140(c), 8 AAC 90.145(c) or 8 AAC 90.160(b).
- The proposed regulations will not limit a trainee under the alternate pathway from taking credit for hours engaged in accredited classroom training that exist under current regulations to help them acquire the 12,000 hours of experience necessary to qualify to take the exam.

**9. 8 AAC 90.137 Plumber Restricted PU Cert. of Fitness P. 16-18 (amended)**

- This section removes the examination requirement for a plumber utility certificate of fitness.
- Based on input from plumber utility worker representatives in the Laborer's Union, the test which is not primarily focused on code knowledge was considered to be an unnecessary barrier to licensure.

**10. 8 AAC 90.140 Plumber Trainee Certificate of Fitness P. 18-19 (repeal/readopt)**

- This proposal removes the restriction that currently limits Alaskans from receiving ANY training in the plumbing trade unless they are enrolled in a federally controlled registered apprenticeship program.
- It also repeals a reference to the on-the-job training option to document work experience subject to the code outside of federally registered apprenticeship that existed prior to 2003.
- This proposal removes the requirement that a trainee must surrender their trainee certificate of fitness if they fail to be continuously enrolled in a federally registered apprenticeship program.
- Finally, this proposal establishes a standard to allow for the department to reciprocate plumbing certificate of fitness licenses under limited conditions with another state when the licensure requirements are substantially similar to Alaska's.
- (The limited conditions are that the applicant has to have passed the exam in the other state and held the license for at least one year in the other state).

**11. 8 AAC 90.160 Electrician Journeyman Certificate of Fitness P. 19-21 (repeal/readopt)**

- This proposal is almost identical to the changes that were made to the plumber certificate of fitness regulation under 8 AAC 90.130.
- The proposal maintains the mandatory requirement for federally registered apprenticeship in order to qualify to take the electrician journeyman exam with 8,000 hours of electrical code work experience.

Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development  
Division of Labor Standards and Safety  
Mechanical Inspection

- The proposal establishes an alternate pathway for a trainee to acquire work experience subject to the National Electrical Code without being indentured in a federally recognized apprenticeship program. After 12,000 hours of documented experience performing work subject to the National Electrical Code as a licensed trainee under the supervision of a qualified journeyman electrician, working for a licensed electrical contractor under the oversight of a properly licensed electrical administrator, the trainee would qualify to take the electrician journeyman exam.
- The proposal puts Alaskans on an equal footing with trainees working in other states who can obtain electrical code work experience without being enrolled in a federally registered apprenticeship program and currently can use that experience to meet the 8,000 hours of experience necessary to sit for the electrical journeyman exam.
- The proposal also clarifies that the current limitation that only up to 2,000 hours of electrical code work experience doing residential electrical work would count toward the 12,000 hours of work experience required to qualify to take the journeyman exam.
- This proposal also contained a clarification that hours obtained through the proposed educational trainee certificate of fitness under 8 AAC 90.300 would count toward up to 1,000 hours of the required experience. However, the department has decided not to move forward with the educational trainee certificate of fitness.

**12. 8 AAC 90.162 Power Lineman Journeyman Certificate of Fitness P. 21-22 (repeal/readopt)**

- This section proposed to eliminate the electrical lineman exam. However, the department has decided not to move forward with this element of the proposal.
- This proposal establishes the same alternate pathway to obtain outside line electrical code work experience outside of a federally registered apprenticeship program.
- The proposal maintains the requirement that a trainee must be enrolled in a federally registered apprenticeship program in order to qualify to take the journeyman exam at 8,000 hours of work experience.
- The proposal establishes an alternate pathway for a trainee to acquire work experience subject to the National Electrical Safety Code without being indentured in a federally recognized apprenticeship program. After 12,000 hours of documented experience performing work subject to the National Electrical Safety Code as a licensed trainee under the supervision of a qualified journeyman lineman, working for a licensed electrical contractor under the oversight of a properly licensed electrical administrator, the trainee would qualify to take the journeyman lineman exam.

Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development  
Division of Labor Standards and Safety  
Mechanical Inspection

- This proposal also intended to allow credit transfer for hours enrolled in the proposed educational trainee certificate of fitness program for up to 1,000 hours. However, the department is not moving ahead with the educational/student trainee certificate of fitness at this time.

**13. 8 AAC 90.165 Electrician and Power Lineman Trainee Cert. of Fitness P 23- (repeal/readopt)**

- This proposal removes the restriction that currently limits Alaskans from receiving ANY training in the electrical trade unless they are enrolled in a federally controlled registered apprenticeship program.
- It also repeals a reference to the on-the-job training option to document work experience subject to the code outside of federally registered apprenticeship that existed prior to 2003.
- This proposal removed language that allows
  1. a journeyman power lineman to work as a trainee performing work subject to the National Electrical Code;
  2. A journeyman residential wireman to work as a trainee performing work subject to the National Electrical Safety Code or the National Electrical Code beyond the scope of residential work; and
  3. A journeyman electrician to work as a trainee performing work subject to the National Electrical Safety Code.

These provisions were removed to clarify that a person should be engaged in a training program whether as a registered apprentice or through an on-the-job training program to work as a trainee in another area of the code. It's designed to expand training opportunities rather than using licensed journeymen in other license categories to perform the work of the trainee.

- This proposal also removes the requirement that a trainee must surrender their trainee certificate of fitness if they fail to be continuously enrolled in a federally registered apprenticeship program.

**14. 8 AAC 90.300 Student Trainee Certificate of Fitness P. 24-25 (new subsection)**

The Department is not moving forward with this proposal. It was designed to allow an educational program like AVTEC to have students perform some real-world training under the supervision of a licensed journeyman. The proposed 10:1 ratio of trainees to instructors was very controversial and the department plans to get additional input through the Alaska Workforce Investment Board before taking further action on this proposal.

**15. 8 AAC 90.900 Definitions P. 26-27 (repeal/readopt)**

Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development  
Division of Labor Standards and Safety  
Mechanical Inspection

- This proposal updates the name of the Office of Apprenticeship and Training. It hasn't been the Bureau of Apprenticeship and Training for years.
- This proposal establishes a definition of "electrical wiring" (paragraph 10) to clarify that certain work activities do not require an electrical certificate of fitness license, such as operating tree trimming equipment, flying a helicopter or operating heavy power equipment. This is current policy based on long-standing guidance from the Attorney General's Office.
- This proposal establishes a definition of "plumbing" (paragraph 16) to clarify that certain work activities do not require a plumbing certificate of fitness license, such as operating heavy power equipment.