

2.19.25

**RE: 5-6-2 in regards to testing work for which a license is required.**

Director Weldon,

There has been a number of questions raised relating to 5-6-2 and what some believe was a "recent change" to the law as far as *testing wires* applies. Specifically this portion of the statute: "No person, firm, or corporation shall enter into, engage in, solicit, advertise, bid for, or work at the business of installing, maintaining, servicing, and testing wires [emphasis added], conduits, apparatus, fixtures". Interpretation of the law can be challenging for those not in the electrical industry and therefore we are addressing this matter as to how the statute should be enforced.

Firstly the law did not change, "testing wires", exactly as written, has been in the law for many years. The entirety of the clarification in the 2024 legislative session was exactly that, clarifications to help unlicensed persons who are unfamiliar with the statute understand what work requires a license as per RIGL 5-6.

The question has been raised, if a plug in receptacle tester, that is designed and listed to be inserted in a receptacle outlet with a visual readout such as illuminated indicator lights, is considered "testing wires". After much discussion and evaluation of the matter, It is the finding of the Board that the use of a plug in receptacle tester is by definition, a "receptacle tester". *Testing wires* reasonably concludes making contact with exposed live parts via wires of a fixture, device, electrical panel, junction box, enclosure, appliance or similar, utilizing a piece of testing equipment with testing leads such as a multi-meter, a voltage tester, amprobe, power quality or power monitoring device.

While the reliability and accuracy of the plug in receptacle tester is limited, and may be unable to verify the existence or integrity of every circuit conductor or the proper type and size of the conductors, the Board concludes using the plug in receptacle tester would not require a person to be licensed according to RIGL 5-6 to operate this particular tester as the law is currently written. The operator of the receptacle tester is in this limited case specifically testing the receptacle itself and not specifically testing the "wires". The Board further concludes that due to the lack of exposed live parts, lack of removal of the electrical device and not disturbing the current state of the receptacle, the *Testing Wires* standard does not apply to plug in receptacle testers.

A second question has been raised on the testing of Ground Fault Circuit Interrupting (GFCI) receptacles by persons not licensed by the chapter. The Board similarly concludes that utilizing the test button on the GFCI receptacle or the GFCI test button on the plug in receptacle tester is not work for which a license is required. This test may also have limited reliability however, there is no language in 5-6 that would prohibit persons not licensed under the chapter from testing GFCI receptacles. This is not unlike the test button on a Smoke Detector. There is no language in RIGL 5-6 that would prohibit using the test button on a Smoke Detector by a person who was not licensed by the chapter.

These conclusions were met at the 2.19.25 meeting of the Board of Examiners of Electricians in a 5 to 0 vote.

Sincerely,



Joseph L. Walsh, Jr / Board Chair