

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
1997 SESSION

S.L. 1997-382
HOUSE BILL 408

AN ACT TO CREATE A FUEL PIPING LICENSE FOR PLUMBING AND HEATING CONTRACTORS, TO AUTHORIZE THE BOARD OF EXAMINERS OF PLUMBING, HEATING, AND FIRE SPRINKLER CONTRACTORS TO CREATE OTHER RESTRICTED LICENSE CLASSIFICATIONS, TO ALLOW THE REVOCATION OR SUSPENSION OF A LICENSE FOR FAILURE TO COMPLY WITH RULES PROMULGATED BY THE BOARD, AND TO CLARIFY WHEN A PERSON PERFORMING ON-SITE ASSEMBLY OF FACTORY DESIGNED DRAIN SYSTEMS IS EXEMPT FROM THE PLUMBING LICENSURE REQUIREMENTS.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

Section 1. G.S. 87-21(b) reads as rewritten:

"(b) Classes of Licenses; Eligibility and Examination of Applicant; Necessity for License. –

- (1) In order to protect the public health, comfort and safety, the Board shall establish two classes of licenses: Class I covering all plumbing, heating, and fire sprinkler systems for all structures, and Class II covering plumbing and heating systems in single-family detached residential dwellings.
- (2) Effective April 15, 1998, the Board shall establish and issue a fuel piping license for use by persons who do not possess the required Class I or Class II plumbing or heating license, but desire to engage in the contracting or installing of fuel piping extending from an approved fuel source at or near the premises, which piping is used or may be used partly or entirely to supply fuel to plumbing or heating systems or equipment or which, by its installation, may alter or affect the fuel supply to plumbing or heating systems or equipment within the meaning of G.S. 87-21(a).

The Board may also establish additional restricted classifications to provide for: (i) the licensing of any person, partnership, firm, or corporation desiring to engage in a specific phase of heating, plumbing, or fire sprinkling contracting; (ii) the licensing of any person, partnership, firm, or corporation desiring to engage in a specific phase of heating, plumbing, or fire sprinkling contracting that is an incidental part of their primary business, which is a lawful

business other than heating, plumbing, or fire sprinkling contracting; or (iii) the licensing of persons desiring to engage in contracting and installing fuel piping from an approved fuel source on the premises to a point inside the residence.

- (3) The Board shall prescribe the standard of competence, experience and efficiency to be required of an applicant for license of each class, and shall give an examination designed to ascertain the technical and practical knowledge of the applicant concerning the analysis of plans and specifications, estimating costs, fundamentals of installation and design, codes, fire hazards, and related subjects as these subjects pertain to plumbing, heating, or fire sprinkler systems. The examination for a fire sprinkler contractor's license shall include such materials as would test the competency of the applicant and which may include the minimum requirements of certification for Level III, subfield of Automatic Sprinkler System Layout, National Institute for Certification of Engineering Technologies (NICET). As a result of the examination, the Board shall issue a certificate of license of the appropriate class in plumbing, heating, or fire sprinkler contracting, and a license shall be obtained, in accordance with the provisions of this Article, before any person, firm or corporation shall engage in, or offer to engage in, the business of plumbing, heating, or fire sprinkler contracting, or any combination thereof. The Board may require experience as a condition of examination, provided that (i) the experience required may not exceed two years, (ii) that up to one-half the experience may be in the form of academic or technical courses of study, and (iii) that registration is not required at the commencement of the period of experience.
- (4) Conditions of examination set by the Board shall be uniformly applied to each applicant within each license classification. It is the purpose and intent of this section that the Board shall provide an examination for plumbing, heating group number one, or heating group number two, or heating group number three, or each restricted classification, and may provide an examination for fire sprinkler contracting or may accept a current certification of the National Institute for Certification in Engineering Technologies for Fire Protection Engineering Technician, Level III, subfield of Automatic Sprinkler System Layout.
- (5) The Board is authorized to issue a certificate of license limited to either plumbing or heating group number one, or heating group number two, or heating group number three, or fire sprinkler contracting, or any combination thereof. The Board is also authorized to issue a certificate of license limited to one or more restricted classifications that are established pursuant to this section.
- (6) Each application for examination shall be accompanied by a check, post-office money order, or cash, in the amount of the annual license

fee required by this Article. Regular examinations shall be given in the months of April and October of each year, and additional examinations may be given at such other times as the Board may deem wise and necessary. Any person may demand in writing a special examination, and upon payment by the applicant of the cost of holding such examination and the deposit of the amount of the annual license fee, the Board in its discretion will fix a time and place for such examination. Upon satisfactory proof of the applicant's inability to write and upon demand of an applicant for a Class II plumbing or heating license six weeks prior to an examination, the Board shall conduct the examination of that applicant orally, and shall not require that applicant to take a written examination as to examination inquiries answered other than by preparation of diagrams. Signed statements from two reliable citizens resident in the home county of the applicant shall constitute satisfactory proof of an applicant's inability to write. A person who fails to pass any examination shall not be reexamined until the next regular examination."

Section 2. G.S. 87-22 reads as rewritten:

"§ 87-22. License fee based on population; expiration and renewal; penalty.

All persons, firms, or corporations engaged in the business of either plumbing or heating contracting, or both, in cities or towns of 10,000 inhabitants or more shall pay an annual license fee not exceeding seventy-five dollars (\$75.00), and in cities or towns of less than 10,000 inhabitants an annual license fee not exceeding fifty dollars (\$50.00). The annual fee for a piping or restricted classification license shall not exceed that for a plumbing or heating license. All persons, firms, or corporations engaged in the business of fire sprinkler contracting shall pay an initial application fee not to exceed seventy-five dollars (\$75.00) and an annual license fee not to exceed three hundred dollars (\$300.00). In the event the Board refuses to license an applicant, the license fee deposited shall be returned by the Board to the applicant. All licenses shall expire on the last day of December in each year following their issuance or renewal. It shall be the duty of the secretary and treasurer to cause to be mailed to every licensee registered hereunder notice to ~~his~~ the licensee's last known address reflected on the records of the Board of the amount of fee required for renewal of license, such notice to be mailed at least one month in advance of the expiration of ~~said~~ the license. In the event of failure on the part of any person, firm or corporation to renew the license certificate annually and pay the fee therefor during the month of January in each year, the Board shall increase ~~said~~ the license fee ten per centum (10%) for each month or fraction of a month that payment is delayed; provided that the penalty for nonpayment shall not exceed the amount of the annual fee, and provided further that the Board requires reexamination upon failure of a licensee to renew license within three years after expiration. The Board may adopt regulations requiring attendance at programs of continuing education as a condition of license renewal. A licensee employed full time as a local government plumbing, heating, or mechanical inspector and holding

qualifications from the Code Officials Qualifications Board may renew ~~his~~the license at a fee not to exceed twenty-five dollars (\$25.00)."

Section 3. G.S. 87-23(a) reads as rewritten:

"(a) The Board shall have power to revoke or suspend the license of or order the reprimand or probation of any plumbing, heating, or fire sprinkler contractor, or any combination thereof, who is guilty of any fraud or deceit in obtaining or renewing a license, or who fails to comply with any provision or requirement of this Article, or the rules adopted by the Board, or for gross negligence, incompetency, or misconduct, in the practice of or in carrying on the business of a plumbing, heating, or fire sprinkler contractor, or any combination thereof, as defined in this Article. Any person may prefer charges of such fraud, deceit, gross negligence, incompetency, misconduct, or failure to comply with any provision or requirement of this Article, or the rules of the Board, against any plumbing, heating, or fire sprinkler contractor, or any combination thereof, who is licensed under the provisions of this Article. All of ~~such~~the charges shall be in writing and ~~verified by the complainant, and such charges shall be heard and determined~~investigated by the Board. Any proceedings on the charges shall be carried out by the Board in accordance with the provisions of Chapter 150B of the General Statutes."

Section 4. G.S. 87-21(c1), as enacted by S.L. 1997-298, reads as rewritten:

"(c1) Exemption. – The provisions of this Article shall not apply to a person who performs the on-site assembly of a factory designed drain line system for a manufactured home, as defined in G.S. 143-143.9(6), if the person (i) is a licensed manufactured home retailer, a licensed manufactured home set-up contractor, or a full-time employee of either, (ii) ~~secures a permit from~~obtains an inspection by the local inspections department and (iii) performs the assembly according to the State Plumbing Code."

Section 5. Sections 1 through 3 of this act become effective October 1, 1997. The remainder of this act is effective when it becomes law.

In the General Assembly read three times and ratified this the 31st day of July, 1997.

s/ Dennis A. Wicker
President of the Senate

s/ Harold J. Brubaker
Speaker of the House of Representatives

s/ James B. Hunt, Jr.
Governor

Approved 8:25 p.m. this 11th day of August, 1997