



Montana Department of LABOR & INDUSTRY

MONTANA BOARD OF PLUMBERS

MONTANA BOARD OF PLUMBERS
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Spring 2016 Edition

CURRENT BOARD MEMBERS

Tim Regan, Master Plumber, Presiding Officer
Miles City, MT Term 5/4/2014 to 5/1/2018
Scott Lemert, Master Plumber
Livingston, MT Term 5/4/2015 to 5/1/2019
Jeffrey Gruizenga, Mechanical Engineer
Billings, MT Term 5/4/2012 to 5/4/2016
Denver Fraser, DEQ Representative
Helena, MT Term 5/4/2015 to 5/4/2019
Steve Carey, Journeyman Plumber
Missoula, MT Term 5/4/2015 to 5/1/2019
Sean Smith, Journeyman Plumber
Anaconda, MT Term 5/4/2014 to 5/1/2018
Donna Paulson, Public Member
Great Falls, MT Term 5/4/2014 to 5/1/2017
Debi Friede, Public Member
Havre, MT Term 5/4/2015 to 5/1/2019
Steve Henry, Public Member
Laurel, MT Term 5/4/2015 to 5/1/2019

DEPARTMENT STAFF

Jason Steffins – Executive Officer
Tyler Moss – Board Counsel
Jeff Garden – Investigation Specialist
Peggy Schram – Investigation Specialist
Hugh Pratt – Investigation Specialist
Griffin Burns – Compliance

BOARD MEETING DATES

MARCH 31st - HELENA
JUNE 16th - HELENA
SEPTEMBER 15th - HELENA
DECEMBER 15th - HELENA

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Executive Officer Report

By Jason Steffins, Executive Officer

Greetings everyone!

Welcome to the first ever newsletter for the Montana Board of Plumbers! As the current Executive Officer for the Electrical, Plumbers and Radiologic Technologists Boards, I hope you find this newsletter insightful, and direct. At this time, I am pleased to report that we should start to see a regular newsletter coming from the Montana Board of Plumbers. Below are several significant highlights about the Board and Department that has taken place over the last few years.

Current licensee numbers:

- 569 Journeyman Plumbers
- 678 Master Plumbers
- 77 Med Gas Endorsement

Legislation:

- 2011: Tried for Unlicensed Practice Bill and advertising without a license. The Bill did not pass.
- 2013: Tried for Unlicensed Practice Bill and Waiver of first citation fine if caught without license. Was added to the Department Bill which did not pass legislation.
- 2015: Tried for Unlicensed Practice Bill: Passed! Also passing was exemption of Apprentices under the Boards directive, Cite and Fine for first offense waived if the licensee can produce proof of a license in 5 days, establishing the ability for the board to have a practical exam if they choose.

Re-Organization and New Database:

- Approximately 3 years ago, the Department was re-organized into Board Management and Licensing Bureaus. We believed that combining all the experts into these 2 groups would provide for better streamlining for boards and licensing experts, but also give us the ability to cross train more effectively. We also brought in the new eBiz system to help with online renewals and to get into the 21st century since our previous database was over 10 years old. Both have brought challenges and great success with many big advances still to come!

Important dates and links:

- Renewals will be due on September 1, 2016. Post cards will be mailed out sometime in August. Make sure to have your CE completed before this date.
- Address and email changes! This is critical for us to communicate with you! Please make sure we have your current ones on file. Visit www.plumber.mt.gov to get them updated.
- If you're having problems with your ePass account, please contact our licensing unit at UnitA@mt.gov or 406-444-6880.





COMPLIANCE REPORT

By Amber Carpenter,
Investigations Supervisor

Inspectors and Investigators have completed eleven plumbing related investigations as well as 368 license checks in the last twelve months (April 2015 – March 2016). The breakdown of those checks for various licensure levels is as follows:

Journeyman - 229

Master - 128

Med Gas - 9

Apprentice licenses are still required to be carried and checked by inspectors, although those numbers no longer reflect in our statistics. The Montana Registered Apprenticeship Program has taken over issuing identification cards for all apprentices in the program.

One citation was issued to an individual who was not licensed in Montana or could not produce a valid license at the time of the license check. In the age of cell phones inspectors are accepting a picture of licenses saved on a cell phone in place of the actual license. The photograph on the cell phone must include the entire license and be legible.

We have just completed an enhancement to the licensing check database that will provide information to the Board about the location that the license checks are taking place. This will allow for a better comparison of where the work is occurring in the state and where the inspections are taking place and the ability to adjust the inspectors focus accordingly. Stay tuned for updates on this enhancement as the new data starts to come in over the next few months!

Bureau of Building & Measurement Standards

By Dave Cook and Cliff Shultz

The Plumbing/Mechanical/Medical Gas Safety Section has several reminders for those working in the field:

As professionals it is important to remember what it takes to be efficient and purposeful in serving the people in our state. Generally, we are seeing quality workmanship of plumbing, mechanical and medical gas installations and realize education is the key. Proper education raises the quality of your installations and the confidence of your consumers. Consumer safety and well-being in homes, businesses and services is the number one goal, at the same time having a profitable balanced business works together to strengthen Montana economic base. The following information is for your consideration to help improve quality of life for us all.

It is asked that inspection requests be made as much in advance of the 24-hour minimum notice time as possible. Request an inspection on-line, text, email or by phone. It will protect you and your customer. Emails directly to the inspector seems to be the most helpful and efficient to inspectors. Information may be found at www.buildingcodes.mt.gov or by emailing buildingcodes@mt.gov

Mechanical Contractors are required to make application and obtain permits prior to beginning any commercial work and to call for inspections. 2012 International Mechanical Code Chapter 1, 106.1.

There have been instances of non-licensed persons setting plumbing finish fixtures for customers on jobs (posing as a cost savings to the customer) that have a plumbing permit. Plumbing contractors have been reluctant to notify the Department of Labor and Industry. However, it's important to consider if this situation is happening to you, you need to report it. Protecting the customer's investment and the liability of unsafe or improper plumbing installations are the responsibility of plumbing contractors.

Codes adopted by certified cities, counties or towns must be the same edition with the same amendments as those adopted by the Department of Labor and Industry, Building Codes Bureau. Consistency of inspections is a vital part of economics and efficiency.

County, city, or town appeal procedure. (1) If a county, city, or town adopts a building code, it shall also establish an appeal procedure by ordinance or resolution, as appropriate that is acceptable to the department. (2) If a county, city, or town does not adopt a code, appeals on the application of the state building code within the county, city, or town must be made to the Department of Labor and Industry Building Codes Bureau.

Persons that are certified to install medical gas must also apply for a Medical Gas endorsement from the Board of Plumbers and to have the endorsement with them when installing Medical Gas Systems.

Ready to retire from plumbing, but not ready to give up your license? You may apply for Retirement Status. Call the Board of Plumbers at 406-444-5711.



Administrator's Corner

Greetings, Licensees and Board members.

I've been in this position now for a little over a year, and it's been a daunting, but rewarding, learning period. I want to thank the Board for their continued honest and open dialogue, and their partnership in getting legislation passed during the 2015 Legislative Session. I also wanted to provide a heads up for the upcoming renewal process. As most of you are aware, the letters notifying you of the requirement to renew are at times helpful and confusing. So, you will be seeing a change during the 2016 renewal period. There will be no letters issued, instead, you will receive another type of communication (postcard and/or email) notifying you of the renewal requirement. Further information will be provided on our website, along with relevant quick links to information and the EBiz portal. Please bear with us, and we welcome any constructive feedback you may have as we roll this out.

Thanks!

Todd Younkin
Business Standards Division Administrator



Lt. Governor Mike Cooney delivering lunch time remarks at the 11th Annual Building Codes Education Conference in Bozeman.

The 11th Annual Building Codes Education Conference was held March 28-31, 2016 and was a great success!

IAPMO Conference – Albuquerque, New Mexico

By Jason Steffins, Executive Officer

IAPMO's 87th annual Education and Business Conference will convene Sept. 26 in picturesque Albuquerque, N.M. Over the years, the conference has evolved into a showcase highlighting the talents of IAPMO staff and volunteers. The IAPMO Conference Planning and Special Projects Committee (CPSPC), in conjunction with IAPMO staff, have again been given the unenviable task of trying to surpass the events from last year's conference in Las Vegas. The IAPMO Plumbing and Mechanical Technical Committees have begun the process of reviewing numerous proposed code changes to the 2018 UPC and UMC. Their recommendations, formulated during the Technical Committee Meetings held in May, will be presented to

the IAPMO membership on Tuesday during the conference. During those UPC/UMC Consideration Sessions, the membership will have an opportunity to review, debate, and vote on those proposed code changes. Additionally, classes covering other code and industry related issues, as well as the ever-popular Plumbing and Mechanical Code Workshops, will round out a great week of education and training. The Montana Board of Plumbers have had a long involvement with this great organization and have built an excellent relationship by networking with multiple states because of this annual conference.

