

CHAPTER 29  
PLUMBING AND MECHANICAL SYSTEMS PROFESSIONALS—  
APPLICATION, LICENSURE, AND EXAMINATION

**641—29.1(105) Definitions.** For purposes of these rules, the following definitions shall apply:

*“Applicable”* means having relevance; appropriate.

*“Apprentice”* means any person, other than a helper, journeyman, or master, who, as a principal occupation, is engaged in working as an employee of a plumbing, HVAC, refrigeration, or hydronic systems contractor under the supervision of either a master or a journeyman and is progressing toward completion of an apprenticeship training program registered by the Office of Apprenticeship of the United States Department of Labor while learning and assisting in the design, installation, and repair of plumbing, HVAC, refrigeration, or hydronic systems, as applicable.

*“Board”* means the plumbing and mechanical systems examining board.

*“Corresponding”* means the same discipline.

*“Department”* means the Iowa department of public health.

*“HVAC”* means heating, ventilation and air conditioning in ducted systems. “HVAC” includes all natural, propane, liquid propane, or other gas lines associated with any component of an HVAC system.

*“Hydronic”* means a heating or cooling system that transfers heating or cooling by circulating fluid through a closed system, including boilers, pressure vessels, refrigerated equipment in connection with chilled water systems, all steam piping, hot or chilled water piping together with all control devices and accessories, installed as part of, or in connection with, any comfort heating or comfort cooling system or appliance using a liquid water or steam as the heating or cooling media. “Hydronic” includes all low-pressure and high-pressure systems.

*“Inactive license”* means a license that is available for a plumbing, HVAC, refrigeration, or hydronic professional who is not actively engaged in running a business or working in the business in the corresponding discipline, in cases such as a retirement, military deployment, or medical leave.

*“Journeyman”* means any person, other than a master, who, as a principal occupation, is engaged as an employee of, or otherwise working under the direction of, a master in the design, installation, and repair of plumbing, HVAC, refrigeration, or hydronic systems, as applicable.

*“Licensee”* means a person licensed by the board as an apprentice, journeyman, or master who provides services in the plumbing, HVAC, refrigeration, or hydronics disciplines.

*“Master”* means any person who works in the planning or superintending of the design, installation, or repair of plumbing, HVAC, refrigeration, or hydronic systems and is otherwise lawfully qualified to conduct the business of plumbing, HVAC, refrigeration, or hydronic systems, and who is familiar with the laws and rules governing the same.

*“Mechanical systems”* means HVAC, refrigeration, and hydronic systems.

*“Medical gas system installer”* means any person who installs or repairs medical gas piping, components, and vacuum systems, including brazers, who has been issued a valid certification from the National Inspection Testing Certification (NITC) Corporation, or an equivalent authority approved by the board.

*“Plumbing”* means all potable water building supply and distribution pipes, all plumbing fixtures and traps, all drainage and vent pipes, and all building drains and building sewers, storm sewers, and storm drains, including their respective joints and connections, devices, receptors, and appurtenances within the property lines of the premises, and including the connection to sanitary sewer, storm sewer, and domestic water mains. “Plumbing” includes potable water piping, potable water treating or using equipment, medical gas piping systems, fuel gas piping, water heaters and vents, including all natural, propane, liquid propane, or other gas lines associated with any component of a plumbing system.

*“Refrigeration”* means any system of refrigeration regardless of the level of power, if such refrigeration is intended to be used for the purpose of food and product preservation and is not intended to be used for comfort systems.

*“Routine maintenance,”* as the term applies in Iowa Code section 105.11(9), is the regular upkeep of plumbing, HVAC, refrigeration, and hydronic systems and equipment, including recurring, preventive

and ongoing maintenance necessary to delay or prevent failure, for which no changes in original design or construction are made. Examples of routine maintenance include replacing wax seals, gaskets, washers, air filters, or belts; oiling a blower motor; cleaning a condensing coil; and repairing damaged ductwork. "Routine maintenance" shall not be interpreted to allow the repair or replacement of furnaces, condensing units, blower motors, boilers, chillers, ductwork systems, water heaters, water pipe systems, waste and vent systems or similar work.

**641—29.2(105) Requirements for licensure.** For each discipline (plumbing, HVAC, refrigeration and hydronics), the following licenses will be available:

**29.2(1)** An applicant for an apprentice license shall:

- a. File an application in accordance with 641—29.5(105).
- b. Certify that the applicant will work under the supervision of a licensed journeyman or master in the applicable discipline by providing the department with the United States Department of Labor Office of Apprenticeship indenture number.
- c. Be enrolled in an applicable apprentice program which is registered with the United States Department of Labor Office of Apprenticeship and provide the department with the United States Department of Labor sponsorship agreement.

**29.2(2)** An applicant for a journeyman license shall:

- a. File an application and pay application fees as established by the board, which application shall establish that the applicant meets the minimum educational and experience requirements adopted by the board.
- b. Pass the state journeyman licensing examination in the applicable discipline.
- c. Provide the board with evidence of having completed at least four years of practical experience as an apprentice. Commencing January 1, 2010, the four years of practical experience required by this paragraph must be an apprenticeship training program registered by the United States Department of Labor Office of Apprenticeship. Documentation must be submitted on a form provided by the board.

**29.2(3)** An applicant for a master license shall:

- a. File an application and pay application fees as established by the board, which application shall establish that the applicant meets the minimum educational and experience requirements adopted by the board.
- b. Pass the state master licensing examination for the applicable discipline.
- c. Provide evidence to the examining board that the applicant has previously been a licensed journeyman for a minimum of two years in the applicable discipline or satisfies all requirements for licensure as a journeyman in the applicable discipline.

**29.2(4)** Inactive license. An applicant for an inactive license shall provide verifiable documentation that the applicant is not actively engaged in running a business or working in the business of plumbing, HVAC, refrigeration, or hydronic discipline, in cases such as a retirement, military deployment, or medical leave.

**641—29.3(105) Medical gas piping certification.** For the plumbing discipline, the following certification is required for a person who performs work as a medical gas system installer. An applicant for a medical gas certificate shall:

**29.3(1)** File an application and pay applicable fees.

**29.3(2)** Possess valid certification from the National Inspection Testing Certification (NITC) Corporation, or an equivalent authority approved by the board. Documentation must be submitted on a form provided by the board.

**641—29.4(105) Minimum qualifications for licensure.** The following minimum requirements shall apply to all licenses issued after July 1, 2008.

**29.4(1)** An applicant for any type of license must be at least 18 years old.

**29.4(2)** Effective January 1, 2010, all apprentice applicants must have completed a high school education or attained GED equivalent.

**29.4(3)** An applicant shall have no record of felony conviction relating to the profession as determined by the board.

**29.4(4)** An applicant of any unit of state or local government, including but not limited to cities, counties, or school corporations, is exempt from licensing requirements if the applicant only performs routine maintenance on a mechanical system or plumbing system, which serves a state-owned facility, while acting within the scope of the state employee's employment. Any other type of work on a mechanical system or plumbing system requires licensing in the applicable discipline.

**641—29.5(105) General requirements for application for licensure.** The following criteria shall apply to application for licensure.

**29.5(1)** On-line or paper application.

*a.* An applicant shall complete a board-approved application either on-line or on a paper application according to instructions contained in the application.

*b.* Applications should be completed on-line since paper applications will incur an additional processing fee. However, paper applications are available to download at <http://www.idph.state.ia.us/eh/plumbing.asp> or to request from the board office by writing to: Plumbing and Mechanical Systems Examining Board, Iowa Department of Public Health, 312 E. 12th Street, 5th Floor, Des Moines, Iowa 50319-0075, or by calling 1-866-280-1521.

**29.5(2)** Fees. In order to be processed, each application must be accompanied by the appropriate fees as determined by the board. All fees are nonrefundable.

*a.* On-line application fees shall be paid by credit card only.

*b.* A paper application shall be accompanied by the appropriate fees payable by check or money order to the Iowa Plumbing and Mechanical Systems Examining Board.

**29.5(3)** If the applicant is notified that the application is incomplete, the applicant must contact the board office within 90 days. The board may be contacted at: Plumbing and Mechanical Systems Examining Board, Iowa Department of Public Health, 312 E. 12th Street, 5th Floor, Des Moines, Iowa 50319, or by calling 1-866-280-1521.

**29.5(4)** No application will be considered by the board without the appropriate verifiable documentation. An applicant must submit the following verifiable documentation:

*a.* A passing score for a discipline-appropriate examination provided by the testing vendor under contract with the board, when testing is required for a license.

*b.* Verification that the applicant has met the minimum requirements as defined in 641—29.4(105) and the established employment experience criteria for each type of license.

**29.5(5)** Complete applications shall be filed with the plumbing and mechanical systems examining board. Incomplete applications shall be considered invalid and after 90 days shall be destroyed.

**641—29.6(105) Examination.**

**29.6(1)** An applicant for licensure as a plumbing or mechanical system professional shall successfully pass the licensing examination for the discipline.

*a.* The examination will be administered by the board-approved vendor.

*b.* The board shall approve the specific examination to be used for each license type.

*c.* Through December 31, 2009, a waiver may be granted to a resident of the state of Iowa or a person employed by a plumbing, HVAC, refrigeration or hydronic business registered with the Iowa division of labor contractor registration program as of July 1, 2008, who meets one of the following conditions:

(1) The applicant has passed a discipline-appropriate examination provided or sponsored by a city, county or subdivision in Iowa and has completed at least eight classroom hours of continuing education in courses or seminars approved by the board within the two-year period immediately preceding the date of the applicant's license application; or

(2) The applicant can provide proof of five years of applicable experience, as determined by the board, between July 2, 1998, and July 1, 2008, the last two years of which have to be within the last five years, between July 2, 2003, and July 1, 2008.

**29.6(2) Examination requirements.**

*a.* The examination will be written and proctored by a nationally recognized testing agency selected by the board through a competitive bid process.

*b.* The examination will be offered periodically during the year. The time and location will rotate between multiple sites in the state of Iowa, as determined by the department, with approval of the board.

*c.* The examination will not be subject to review by applicants. The testing vendor shall, upon request from an applicant, provide information about the sections that the applicant failed, but shall not provide an applicant access to actual examination questions or answers. Any fees associated with the review process will be assessed by and payable to the testing vendor. The applicant is responsible for paying all associated examination fees.

*d.* A score of 75 percent or better will be considered passing.

**29.6(3) Examination application requirements.**

*a.* An applicant shall complete and submit a board-approved examination application either on-line or on a paper application a minimum of 15 business days prior to taking an examination. An applicant shall complete the application form according to instructions contained in the application.

*b.* Examination applications should be completed on-line since paper applications will incur an additional processing fee. However, paper applications are available to download at <http://www.idph.state.ia.us/eh/plumbing.asp> or to request from the board office by writing to: Plumbing and Mechanical Systems Examining Board, Iowa Department of Public Health, 312 E. 12th Street, 5th Floor, Des Moines, Iowa 50319-0075, or by calling 1-866-280-1521.

*c.* Fees. In order to be processed, each application must be accompanied by the appropriate fees as determined by the board. All fees are nonrefundable.

(1) On-line examination application fees shall be paid by credit card only.

(2) A paper examination application shall be accompanied by the appropriate fees payable by check or money order to the Iowa Plumbing and Mechanical Systems Examining Board.

*d.* No application will be considered by the board without the appropriate verifiable documentation.

*e.* The applicant will be notified and issued an examination entrance letter upon approval of the examination application.

*f.* If the applicant is notified that the application is incomplete, the applicant must contact the board office within 90 days. The board may be contacted at: Plumbing and Mechanical Systems Examining Board, Iowa Department of Public Health, 312 E. 12th Street, 5th Floor, Des Moines, Iowa 50319, or by calling 1-866-280-1521.

*g.* Incomplete applications shall be considered invalid and after 90 days shall be destroyed.

*h.* Examination fees shall be payable directly to the board-approved testing vendor.

(1) All transactions shall be the responsibility of the applicant and testing vendor.

(2) The board shall not be held responsible for refunds from the testing vendor.

*i.* An applicant shall present current photo identification in order to sit for the examination.

*j.* An applicant for licensure by examination who does not pass the examination within one year from the original application date will be required to submit a new application.

*k.* A master applicant shall be licensed with the state of Iowa as a journeyman in the discipline for a minimum of two years prior to application for examination.

*l.* A journeyman examination applicant may apply to sit for the examination up to 60 days prior to completion of the 48 months of required apprentice credit which shall include the granting of advanced standing or credit for previously acquired experience, training, or skills. The application for licensure will not be processed until all required criteria are complete and the certificate of completion from the United States Department of Labor Office of Apprenticeship has been issued.

**641—29.7(105) License renewal.**

**29.7(1)** The period of licensure to practice as an apprentice, journeyman, or master in the plumbing, HVAC, refrigeration, or hydronics disciplines shall be biennial (every two years).

a. The board shall send a renewal notice by regular mail to each licensee at the address on record at least 60 days prior to the expiration of the license.

b. The licensee is responsible for renewing the license prior to its expiration.

c. Failure of the licensee to receive the notice does not relieve the licensee of the responsibility for renewing the license.

**29.7(2) Specific renewal requirements.**

a. A licensee seeking renewal shall:

(1) Meet the continuing education requirements, at least eight classroom hours of instruction during each two-year licensing term. A licensee whose license was reactivated during the current renewal compliance period may use continuing education credit earned during the compliance period for the first renewal following reactivation; and

(2) Submit the completed renewal application and renewal fee before the license expiration date.

b. Failure to renew a license within a reasonable time after the expiration of the license shall not invalidate the license, but a reasonable penalty may be assessed as adopted by rule, in addition to the license renewal fee, to allow reinstatement of the license.

(1) A licensee who allows a license to lapse for one month or less may reinstate and renew the license without examination upon payment of a late fee and appropriate renewal of license fee as defined in 641—subrule 28.1(5).

(2) A licensee who allows a license to lapse for more than one month but less than two months may reinstate and renew the license without examination upon payment of a late fee equivalent to the appropriate license fee and appropriate renewal of license fee as defined in 641—subrule 28.1(5).

c. A licensee who allows a license to lapse for more than two months is required to retake and pass the applicable licensing examination and pay appropriate renewal of license fee as defined in 641—subrule 28.1(5) in order to obtain reinstatement and renewal of that person's license.

(1) A licensee who fails to renew the license by the end of the two-month period has a lapsed license.

(2) A licensee whose license is lapsed may not practice as a plumbing or mechanical professional until the license is reinstated and renewed.

(3) A licensee who practices as a plumbing or mechanical professional in the state of Iowa with a lapsed license may be subject to disciplinary action by the board, injunctive action pursuant to Iowa Code chapter 105, criminal sanctions pursuant to Iowa Code chapter 105, and other available legal remedies.

**641—29.8(105) Denial of license.**

**29.8(1)** When the board denies an applicant licensure, the board shall notify the applicant of the denial in writing by certified mail, return receipt requested, or in the manner of service of an original notice, and shall cite the reasons for which the application was denied.

**29.8(2)** An applicant who has been denied licensure by the board may appeal the denial and request a hearing on the issues related to the licensure denial by serving a written notice of appeal and request for hearing upon the board by certified mail, return receipt requested, not more than 30 days following the date of mailing of the notification of licensure denial to the applicant. The request for hearing shall specifically describe the facts to be contested and determined at the hearing.

**29.8(3)** If an applicant who has been denied licensure by the board appeals the licensure denial and requests a hearing pursuant to this rule, the hearing and subsequent procedures shall be held pursuant to the process outlined in Iowa Code chapters 17A and 272C.

These rules are intended to implement Iowa Code chapter 105.

[Filed emergency 12/23/08 after Notice 11/5/08—published 1/14/09, effective 1/1/09]