

Advisory Ruling

Wiring of Oil Burners by Oil Burner Technicians

Background

Thanks to the work of the Massachusetts Oilheat Council (MOC) and its allies, licensed oil burner technicians in Massachusetts have expanded abilities to wire oil burner equipment, and the fuel oil industry no longer has to deal with varying interpretations of regulations and laws pertaining to the wiring of equipment that have been disruptive and costly to consumers.

In February of 1994, after nearly two years of complex, sensitive government affairs work, MOC and the local chapters of the National Association of Oil Heat Services Manager negotiated an agreement with the Board of State Examiners of Electricians (BSEE), the Massachusetts Electrical Board, the Department of Public Safety and the Division of Registration. The BSEE issued an Advisory Ruling, which was distributed to all Inspectors of Wires and local fire departments. Remember: A key component of the ruling is that an electrical permit must be secured before performing any electrical work on oil burning systems.

Ruling

The Board of State Examiners of Electricians (Board) by letter of December 3, 1993, has been requested by the Massachusetts Oilheat Council to render an advisory ruling pursuant to Massachusetts General Laws (G.L.) Chapter 30A, section 8, as to type of electrical wiring which may be performed by oil burner technicians certified by the Department of Public Safety under G.L. c. 148, s. 10D in connection with the normal service work performed by such technicians. Under the authority granted to it by G.L. c. 30A, s. 8, the Board hereby issues the following Advisory Ruling:

1. Certified oil burner technicians are exempt with respect to the portion of repair and replacement work they perform involving electrical wiring on such repair or replacement work from the mandate of G.L. c. 141 requiring that all electrical work performed for hire be performed by licensed electricians.
2. The regulations governing oil burner installations are contained in 527 CMR 4.00 as promulgated by the Board of Fire Prevention Regulations (BFPR).
3. The regulations governing the installation of electrical wiring are contained in 527 CMR. 12.00, the Massachusetts Electrical Code (Code) as promulgated by the BFPR and enforced by the local inspectors of wires and the Board.

4. Any electrical work performed for hire is subject to the permit and inspections requirements set forth in G.L. c. 143, s. 3L. Accordingly, any wiring performed by certified oil burner technicians, and any wiring performed by licensed electricians on or about oil burning equipment, shall be inspected in accordance with G.L. c. 143, s. 3L.
5. The following defines the scope of electrical wiring that may be performed by certified oil burner technicians:
 - a. On an entirely new installation in either a new or existing building where oil burning equipment is not currently used, all wiring, including controls, zone valves, thermostats, etc., shall be performed by a licensed electrician.
 - b. On an existing oil burning equipment installation, a certified oil burner technician may install, on the load side of the required service switch, in conjunction with the replacement of controls, devices or utilization equipment, lengths of flexible metal conduit up to a maximum length of six (6) feet and the conductors contained within the conduit and class 2 cables to such controls. This applies to unit replacements only and does not include the installation of any additional controls or utilization equipment.
 - c. On a total unit replacement, a certified oil burner technician may disconnect the existing junction box attached to the existing oil burning equipment and reattach said junction box to replacement oil burning equipment, provided that the reconnection is made with not more than ten (10) feet of electrical metallic tubing (emt) containing no couplings or six (6) feet of flexible metal conduit.
 - d. The requirements contained in Part 5 (c) of this Advisory Ruling do not apply to installations where additional equipment such as circulators, zone valves, etc. is installed at the time of said replacement. Any replacements which include the installation of additional equipment shall have all wiring performed by a licensed electrician.
 - e. Certified oil burner technicians may only perform the wiring outlined in this Advisory Ruling on installations where the electrical circuit is single phase, 120 volts.
6. Any oil burner technician who is alleged to have performed electrical work outside the scope as defined in this Advisory Ruling shall be subject to a hearing before the Board of Boiler Rules and Regulations on whether this oil burner certificate should be suspended or revoked for such conduct.

7. If the inspector of wires, upon inspection of an oil burner installation, finds defects or deficiencies in the existing branch circuit wiring, at the request of the inspector such wiring shall be replaced by a licensed electrician.
8. The Department of Public Safety has revised its procedure for filing a complaint against an oil burner technician who is alleged to have performed electrical work beyond the permissible scope set forth in this Advisory Ruling. The Board of State Examiners of Electricians shall refer all such complaints to the Department for investigation and appropriate disciplinary action.
9. The Massachusetts Oilheat Council has agreed to require any oil burner technician to whom it provides training to receive electrical instruction in the areas of grounding and overcurrent protection from a licensed Master Electrician.
10. The Board has rendered this Advisory Ruling on the basis of the laws, regulations, and trade practices in effect at the time of the request for such ruling and reserves the right to amend or rescind this Ruling upon any changes to said laws, regulations or trade practices. The Board further reserves the right to periodically review the overall effect of this Advisory Ruling upon the citizens of the Commonwealth and to modify or rescind the ruling should compelling evidence come before the Board of any unforeseen negative impact upon the health, safety and welfare of the citizens of the Commonwealth as a result of this ruling.

Signed 2/9/94
F. James Kauffman, State Fire Marshal
Chairman, Board of State Examiners of Electricians