



Guidelines Re: Pipefitting and Refrigeration Apprenticeships Registration and Licensing Requirements

Issued Jointly by Division of Apprentice Standards and Division of Occupational Licensure Office of Public Safety and Inspections

May 12, 2022

I. Background

The Division of Apprentice Standards (DAS) and the Division of Occupational Licensure's (DOL) Office of Public Safety and Inspections (OPSI) have received a number of questions regarding apprenticeship program registration and licensing requirements for the Pipefitting and Refrigeration professions.

Apprenticeships are an integral part of these trades and allow individuals to gain the necessary skills and knowledge to succeed not only for the exam, but as a professional in the field. During an apprenticeship, all apprentices must complete practical, on-the-job training (OJT) hours, as well as classroom hours or Related Technical Instruction (RTI). To ensure that this experience is both safe and comprehensive, all DAS and DOL requirements must be met: apprentices within these professions must be **both registered with DAS, and licensed by DOL**. In other words, the registered apprentice must hold both a DAS-issued apprenticeship card and a DOL apprentice license at the same time, except as described below in IV.C. Apprentice Licensure Grace Period.

II. The Scope of Pipefitting and Refrigeration Work

A. When a License Is Required

In Massachusetts, all pipefitting and refrigeration work (as defined below) must be performed by a licensed individual, unless the facility where that work is performed is exempt:

- **Pipefitting**: installation, repair, replacement, maintenance or alteration of any apparatus for piping appliances, as defined in devices or accessories for heating systems having a rating greater than 700,000 BTU, including both Power/Heating/Cooling Pipefitting and Process Piping.
- **Refrigeration**: installation, repair, replacement, and/or maintenance of any refrigerant containing part of any refrigeration system with a capacity of ten (10) tons or greater.

Apprentices may only legally perform these functions while registered with DAS, employed by a Pipefitter Master or Refrigeration Contractor, and licensed by DOL except as described below in IV.C. Apprentice Licensure Grace Period. Apprentices performing work outside of this scope, (e.g., repair or

maintenance of refrigeration systems under ten tons), must still be registered with DAS, but are not required to concurrently hold a DOL-issued apprentice license.

B. Exempt Facilities

Government agencies, hospitals, schools, industrial plants, and utility companies are considered exempt from DOL licensing requirements. An individual who is employed at a singular exempt facility and who works only on the systems at that facility is not required to hold a DOL license.¹

- Work hours for an exempt employer can be utilized towards the OJT hours necessary to complete a DAS-registered apprenticeship. With the DAS Certificate of Completion, you can continue to work at exempt facilities in Massachusetts.
- Work done at an exempt facility even if it is in scope, will not count towards the OJT hours required to sit for a DOL exam unless the apprentice is licensed with the DOL and works for a duly licensed Pipefitter Master or Refrigeration Contractor.²

III. Apprentice Registration and Licensure

A. DAS Apprentice Registration

The Division of Apprentice Standards (DAS) is charged with administering apprentice programs throughout the Commonwealth and has the authority to register and approve apprentice programs. After DAS approves an apprenticeship program, the program's "Sponsor" may add individual apprentices to its registered program. This is done by generating an apprentice agreement, which must be reviewed and signed by both the sponsor and the apprentice and approved by DAS. This task can be completed at <https://elicensing21.mass.gov/lwd>. After the agreement is approved, DAS will issue an apprentice identification card. Following receipt of the apprentice ID card, the newly registered apprentice is required to apply for a license with DOL before beginning any pipefitting or refrigeration work, if they will be performing work that falls within the scope of DOL licensure.

B. DOL Apprentice Licensure

The Division of Occupational Licensure (DOL), through the Bureau of Pipefitters, Refrigeration Technicians, and Sprinkler Fitters, licenses and regulates the pipefitting and commercial refrigeration trades in Massachusetts. An apprentice employed within the "Scope of Work" above must apply for a DOL license immediately following registration with DAS and prior to beginning such work. Any unlicensed hours an apprentice works prior to being issued a license by DOL will not count towards the hours required to sit for a licensing exam, except as described below in IV.C. Apprentice Licensure Grace Period.

In order to become licensed with DOL, registered apprentices must provide DOL with a copy of their valid DAS ID card and their high school diploma or equivalency certificate. Further, the employing Master Pipefitter or Refrigeration Contractor must sign off on the apprentice's application.³

Further information regarding DOL apprentice licensure (including applications) can be found here:

¹ M.G.L. c. 146, §§ 87, 88

² 528 CMR 11.02(3)(c); 528 CMR 11.03(2)(d)

³ 528 CMR 11.02(3)(a)(3); 528 CMR 11.03(2)(a)

- Pipefitter Apprentices: <https://www.mass.gov/service-details/apprentice-pipefitter>
- Refrigeration Apprentices: <https://www.mass.gov/service-details/refrigeration-apprentice>

IV. Becoming a Journeyperson

A. Completing a DAS Apprenticeship

Following DAS Apprenticeship Registration (as explained above), a registered apprentice must meet the requirements of a Registered Apprenticeship Program (RAP). Once an apprentice successfully fulfills a DAS requirements and terms of the RAP, DAS will issue a Certificate of Completion.

Sponsors may additionally submit a request to DAS to modify an existing RAP's OJT and RTI hours, based on DOL's licensing requirements. The requested adjustment must meet DOL's minimum OJT and RTI requirements (see below). Following DAS approval of proposed changes to a RAP, the related Apprentice Agreements may be modified or updated in accordance with the updated RAP.

B. Applying for the DOL Exam: Employment and Education Requirements

In order to be eligible for the DOL exam, a licensed apprentice must provide documentation of all required OJT and RTI hours to DOL. OJT hours must be reported by the employing Pipefitter Master or Refrigeration Contractor. The apprentice must hold a valid apprentice license issued by DOL for all OJT hours to be eligible for exam, except as described below in IV.C. Apprentice Licensure Grace Period. RTI hours must be verified by the training institution; a list of approved schools is available at: <https://www.mass.gov/service-details/schools-approved-by-opsi>.

1. *DOL Pipefitter Employment and Education Hour Requirements for Licensure*

- At least 6,000 hours in Massachusetts as a licensed apprentice pipefitter and 350 hours of A.S.M.E. Code instruction;
- At least 4,000 hours in Massachusetts as a licensed apprentice pipefitter, and 200 hours of A.S.M.E. Code instruction, and 500 hours of study in a pipefitter's course, of which 250 hours of is practical, shop-related work; **or**
- At least 2,000 hours in Massachusetts as a licensed apprentice pipefitter and 200 hours of A.S.M.E. Code instruction, and 1000 hours of study in a pipefitter's course, of which 700 hours of practical, shop-related work.

2. *DOL Refrigeration Employment and Education Hour Requirements for Licensure*

- At least 6,000 hours in Massachusetts as a licensed Refrigeration Apprentice, and 250 hours in a refrigeration course, which must consist of 100 hours of refrigeration theory AND 150 hours of related Massachusetts electrical code training;
- At least 4,000 hours in Massachusetts as a licensed Refrigeration Apprentice and 500 hours in a refrigeration course, of which 250 hours must be shop related work, 100 hours of refrigeration theory, and 100 hours of related Massachusetts electrical code training; **or**
- At least 2,000 hours in Massachusetts as a licensed Refrigeration Apprentice, and 1,000 hours in a refrigeration course, of which 700 hours must be shop related work, 100 hours of refrigeration theory, and 100 hours of related Massachusetts electrical code training.

C. Apprentice Licensure Grace Period

Pipefitting and refrigeration apprentices who are currently registered with DAS, but not licensed by DOL, must immediately apply for a DOL apprentice license if they are working within the scope of DOL licensure. To address any confusion that may have existed previously regarding the DAS apprenticeship registration and DOL licensure processes, DOL may, at its discretion, accept documentation from the apprentice's employing Pipefitter Master or Refrigeration Contractor along with proof of the duration of DAS registration. To utilize this grace period, the apprentice license must be issued by DOL prior to 6/30/2023. Unlicensed work will not otherwise be considered towards exam hours.

D. Certificate of Completion Requirement

As of the date of these Guidelines Re: Pipefitting and Refrigeration Apprenticeships Registration and Licensing Requirements, DOL will no longer require a formal DAS Certificate of Completion of Apprenticeship. If a registered apprentice is issued a Pipefitter Journeyman or Refrigeration Technician license after passing the exam, the apprentice must still meet all of the requirements of a Registered Apprenticeship Program to receive a Certificate of Completion from DAS.

E. Exam Application

For more information, including all exam requirements and forms to apply for a Pipefitter Journeyman or Refrigeration Technician license exam, visit:

- Journeyman Pipefitter <https://www.mass.gov/service-details/journeyman-pipefitter>
- Refrigeration Technician <https://www.mass.gov/service-details/refrigeration-technician-license>

For Further Information:

For information on Registered Apprenticeship at the Division of Apprentice Standards, please contact apprenticeship@mass.gov or 617-626-5442.

For further information on Pipefitter and Refrigeration Licensing Requirements at the Division of Occupational Licensure, please contact: opsi-info@mass.gov or 617-727-3200.