

- SUBJECT:** Changing regulations related to plumbers
- COMMITTEE:** Licensing and Administrative Procedures — committee substitute recommended
- VOTE:** 8 ayes — Smith, Gutierrez, Geren, Goldman, Guillen, Kuempel, D. Miller, S. Thompson
- 0 nays
- 1 absent — Miles
- WITNESSES:** For — Paul Lawrence, Texas Rainwater Catchment Association; Stanley Briers, Texas Plumbing Air Conditioning Mechanical Contractors Association; Robert Doran; (*Registered, but did not testify:* Alicia Dover, Associated Plumbing Heating Cooling Contractors of Texas; Leonard Aguilar, Southwest Pipe Trades Association)
- Against — None
- On — (*Registered, but did not testify:* Lisa Hill, Texas State Board of Plumbing Examiners)
- BACKGROUND:** Occupations Code, ch. 1301, establishes the Texas State Board of Plumbing Examiners, which is responsible for licensing and registering plumbers and enforcing plumbing regulations.
- Due to the technological advancement of plumbing systems, some have called for new codes and standards to be adopted to account for industry changes.
- DIGEST:** CSHB 2465 would make several changes to regulations governing plumbers.
- The bill would require the board to adopt certain codes as they existed January 1, 2015. The board could adopt by rule a new edition of any

applicable code that was revised after January 1, 2015, if the board determined that the use of the new edition was in the public interest and was consistent with the purposes of Occupations Code, ch. 1301.

The bill would increase the number of hours from 500 to 1,000 of work experience the board could credit a plumber's apprentice with if the apprentice requested and had completed the classroom portion of a certain training program. These hours could count toward the required work experience hours needed before an apprentice could take an examination for a license.

The bill would create an exception to the licensing requirements for plumbers in cases where the person was employed by a political subdivision to engage in plumbing-related work only within the geographical boundaries of the political subdivision.

A continuing professional education course needed for the renewal of licenses and endorsements related to plumbing, and certificates of registration for drain cleaners, drain cleaner-restricted registrants, or residential utilities installers, would be required to include training in applicable state regulations, board rules, and board-approved plumbing codes. This would be in addition to the training in health protection and conservation of energy or water that is required under current law.

The bill would require a plumber's apprentice renewing their certificate of registration for the third or more time to complete the training noted above. This training requirement would not apply to renewals of licenses, endorsements, or certificates of registration that expired before the effective date of this bill.

A plumber's apprentice would be exempted from the renewal training requirement if the apprentice was enrolled and in good standing in a training program approved by the U.S. Labor Department or if the board determined that the exemption would be in the public interest.

The board would require a person seeking a medical gas piping

installation endorsement to complete a board-approved training program in that area before taking the examination required for endorsement. This requirement would not apply to applications for such an endorsement submitted before the effective date of this bill. The bill also would require certain municipalities to regulate by ordinance or bylaw the maintenance, including construction and inspection, of fixtures that facilitated medical gas or medical vacuum.

The bill would add falsifying of a test for an inspection as a violation subject to disciplinary action.

The bill also would change the requirements or qualifications of certain members of the nine-member Texas State Board of Plumbing Examiners, which would apply only to a member appointed on or after the effective date of this bill.

The bill would take effect September 1, 2015, and the board would be required to adopt necessary rules to implement the bill as soon as practicable after that date.