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Introduced by Sens. SAVINO, ADDABBO, MANNION, MATTERA, SEPULVEDA -- read twice and ordered printed, and when printed to be committed to the Committee on Consumer Protection -- recommitted to the Committee on Consumer Protection in accordance with Senate Rule 6, sec. 8 -- committee discharged, bill amended, ordered reprinted as amended and recommitted to said committee -- reported favorably from said committee, ordered to first and second report, ordered to a third reading, passed by Senate and delivered to the Assembly, recalled, vote reconsidered, restored to third reading, amended and ordered reprinted, retaining its place in the order of third reading

AN ACT to amend the general business law, in relation to fire suppression systems and licensing professionals to perform authorized work on fire suppression systems

The People of the State of New York, represented in Senate and Assembly, do enact as follows:

1 Section 1. Legislative intent. (a) The legislature hereby finds that:
2 (1) The manner in which fire suppression or sprinkler systems are
3 constructed, installed, maintained and inspected have a direct and
4 substantial impact on public safety.
5 (2) Improper construction, installation, maintenance or inspection of
6 fire suppression systems by persons lacking adequate education, training
7 and experience can lead to serious injuries, death and substantial prop-
8 erty damage.
9 (3) Promulgating a code establishing minimum qualification standards
10 for work performed on fire suppressions systems, including criteria for
11 the education, training, testing and licensing of persons performing
12 such work will promote public safety.
13 (b) It is the intent of the legislature and this act:
14 (1) To ensure that work on fire suppression systems is performed by
15 persons who have sufficient education, training and experience in such
16 work.

EXPLANATION--Matter in italics (underscored) is new; matter in brackets
[-] is old law to be omitted.

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(2) To ensure that adequate qualification standards are maintained through adherence of proper education, training, testing and licensing requirements for those engaged in the sprinkler fitting trades.

(3) To establish a state board of examiners for the sprinkler fitting industry to ensure proper qualification and examination of persons performing work on fire suppression systems and to ensure proper adherence to and enforcement of the requirements of this act and applicable regulations issued pursuant to this act.

§ 2. The general business law is amended by adding a new article 40-A to read as follows:

ARTICLE 40-A

FIRE SUPPRESSION SYSTEMS

Section 930. Definitions.

931. Authorized work on fire suppression systems.

932. State board of examiners for the sprinkler fitting industry.

933. Powers and duties of the state board of examiners for the sprinkler fitting industry.

934. Sprinkler fitter license.

935. Sprinkler fitter apprentice and helper permits.

936. Fire suppression system inspector.

937. Reciprocity.

938. Transitional grace period.

939. Registry of sprinkler fitter licenses and permits.

940. Violations.

941. Penalties.

942. Enforcement.

943. Severability.

§ 930. Definitions. As used in this article, unless the context requires otherwise:

(a) "Fire suppression system" means an automatic or manual system designed to protect occupants and/or buildings or structures from fire. Such systems include, but are not limited to, water sprinkler, water spray, foam-water, foam-water spray, carbon dioxide, foam extinguishing, wet chemical, halogenated and other chemical systems used for fire protection. Such systems also include the supply mains, yard hydrants, standpipes, tank heaters, hose connections to sprinkler systems, air lines and thermal systems used in connection with sprinklers and pumps dedicated for fire suppression.

(b) "Fire suppression system inspector" means a person licensed under this article to perform inspections on fire suppression systems.

(c) "Fire suppression system inspector license" means a license issued to a fire suppression system inspector pursuant to this article authorizing the person to perform inspections on fire suppression systems.

(d) "Public employer" shall mean (i) the state of New York, (ii) a county, city, town, village or any other political subdivision or civil division of the state, (iii) a school district or any governmental entity operating a public school, college or university, (iv) a public improvement or special district, (v) a public authority, commission or public benefit corporation, or (vi) any other public corporation, agency, instrumentality or unit of government which exercises governmental power under the laws of the state.

(e) "Sprinkler fitter" means a person, other than an apprentice or helper regulated under this article, who performs work on a fire suppression system as defined by this section.

1 (f) "Sprinkler fitter apprentice" means a person who is enrolled in a
2 sprinkler fitter apprenticeship program and is learning and working on
3 fire suppression systems under the supervision of another person certi-
4 fied in accordance with the provisions of this article.

5 (g) "Sprinkler fitter apprentice permit" means a permit issued to an
6 apprentice sprinkler fitter pursuant to this article authorizing the
7 person to perform work on fire suppression systems.

8 (h) "Sprinkler fitter apprenticeship program" means an apprenticeship
9 training program that is approved by the U.S. department of labor,
10 bureau of apprenticeship and training or a state apprenticeship agency
11 and consists of a minimum of eight thousand hours of documented practi-
12 cal experience in work on fire suppression systems, combined with a
13 minimum of seven hundred twenty hours of related instruction, including
14 classroom or shop instruction, in the sprinkler fitter trade.

15 (i) "Sprinkler fitter helper" means a person who works on fire
16 suppression systems under the direct supervision of a licensed sprinkler
17 fitter.

18 (j) "Sprinkler fitter helper permit" means a permit issued to a sprin-
19 kler fitter helper pursuant to this article authorizing the person to
20 perform work on fire suppression systems under the direct supervision of
21 a licensed sprinkler fitter.

22 (k) "Sprinkler fitter license" means a license issued to a sprinkler
23 fitter pursuant to this article authorizing the person to perform work
24 on fire suppression systems.

25 (l) "State board of examiners for the sprinkler fitting industry" or
26 "board" means the board of examiners created pursuant to this article.

27 (m) "Work on a fire suppression system" means the construction,
28 installation, alteration, renovation, removal, repair, servicing, main-
29 tenance or testing of fire suppression systems, unless specifically
30 excluded by the provisions of this article.

31 § 931. Authorized work on fire suppression systems. (a) No person
32 within the jurisdiction of this state may perform work on a fire
33 suppression system unless he or she:

34 (1) Possesses a sprinkler fitter license, sprinkler fitter apprentice
35 or helper permit or fire suppression system inspector license issued
36 pursuant to this article;

37 (2) Performs work on portable fire extinguishers or work on dry stand-
38 pipes that are not connected to a fire suppression system;

39 (3) Is employed as a state or local fire official; or

40 (4) Performs work on fire suppression systems of a public employer as
41 an employee of such public employer.

42 (b) No person may employ a person or cause or direct a person to
43 perform work on a fire suppression system unless the person performing
44 such work possesses a sprinkler fitter license, sprinkler fitter appren-
45 tice or helper permit or fire suppression system inspector license
46 issued pursuant to this article.

47 (c) No person, corporation, partnership or other business entity may
48 perform or contract to perform work on fire suppression systems except
49 through persons who possess a sprinkler fitter license, sprinkler fitter
50 apprentice or helper permit or fire suppression system inspector license
51 issued pursuant to this article.

52 (d) The requirements of this article do not apply to work on fire
53 suppression systems in New York city, Nassau county or Suffolk county,
54 or to work on fire suppression systems of a public employer performed by
55 employees of such public employer.

1 (e) Nothing in this article shall prevent any political subdivision of
2 the state from enacting local legislation that establishes qualification
3 standards for the sprinkler fitter trade that exceed the requirements of
4 this article.

5 § 932. State board of examiners for the sprinkler fitting industry.
6 (a) There is hereby established in the safety and health license and
7 certification unit of the department of labor a state board of examiners
8 for the sprinkler fitting industry.

9 (b) Composition. The board shall consist of seven members appointed by
10 the governor, with advice and consent of the senate, as follows:

11 (1) one representative from the division of homeland security and
12 emergency services, office of fire prevention and control;

13 (2) one representative from the department of state, division of
14 building standards and codes;

15 (3) one fire suppression contractor;

16 (4) one licensed fire protection engineer;

17 (5) one sprinkler fitter licensed in accordance with this article;

18 (6) one representative from the New York state pipe trades associ-
19 ation; and

20 (7) one representative from the New York state apprenticeship and
21 training council.

22 § 933. Powers and duties of the state board of examiners for the
23 sprinkler fitting industry. In addition to all other powers and duties
24 conferred or imposed upon the board, the board is authorized and
25 empowered to:

26 (a) elect its own officers and prescribe their duties;

27 (b) grant sprinkler fitter licenses and permits to duly qualified
28 applicants as provided in this article;

29 (c) establish fees that are reasonable and necessary to defray the
30 cost of administering this article;

31 (d) promulgate, adopt, amend, and repeal such rules and regulations,
32 not inconsistent with the laws of this state, as may be necessary for
33 the orderly conduct of its affairs and the administration of this arti-
34 cle;

35 (e) enforce the provisions of this article and any codes, rules or
36 regulations hereunder through inspections, audits, citations, civil
37 penalties, and any other appropriate means;

38 (f) subpoena records and documents, conduct hearings and compel the
39 attendance of witnesses pursuant to an investigation or a hearing of the
40 board;

41 (g) bring a suit, in any court of competent jurisdiction, to cause the
42 enjoinder of all persons violating this article. When seeking an injunc-
43 tion, the board shall not be required to prove that an adequate remedy
44 at law does not exist or that substantial or irreparable damages would
45 result if an injunction is not granted;

46 (h) establish and administer or contract out to a recognized third-
47 party certifier for examinations as required for licenses under this
48 article and determine satisfactory performance for these examinations;

49 (i) revoke or suspend a license or permit issued under this article,
50 or reprimand persons for incompetence or any violations of this article
51 or rules or regulations of the board; and

52 (j) establish a procedure for reinstating licenses or permits that
53 have been revoked or suspended, including the use of retesting proce-
54 dures.

55 § 934. Sprinkler fitter license. (a) To obtain a sprinkler fitter
56 license under this article, an applicant must:

1 (1) pay an application fee established by the board; and
2 (2) provide evidence demonstrating that he or she has successfully
3 completed a sprinkler fitter apprenticeship program and has passed a
4 sprinkler fitter license examination established by the board; or
5 (3) meet the requirements of section nine hundred thirty-seven or nine
6 hundred thirty-eight of this article.

7 (b) All persons holding a sprinkler fitter license under this article
8 shall complete a minimum of eight hours annually of education and skill
9 training on fire suppression systems, provided:

10 (1) courses for such training shall be pre-approved by the board and
11 evidence of completion of continuing education requirements shall be
12 submitted to the board with the application for license renewal; and

13 (2) the continuing education requirement does not apply until the
14 conclusion of the first full year after initial issuance of a person's
15 sprinkler fitter license.

16 (c) A sprinkler fitter license under this article shall be valid for a
17 period of three years from date of issue.

18 (d) The board shall renew for a period of three years licenses or
19 permits as provided by this article upon receiving a completed renewal
20 application and required fee as determined by the board.

21 (e) Any person who is issued a sprinkler fitter license shall be
22 issued a photo identification card and shall maintain such card in his
23 or her possession at all times when performing work on fire suppression
24 systems.

25 § 935. Sprinkler fitter apprentice and helper permits. (a) To obtain a
26 sprinkler fitter apprentice permit, an applicant must:

27 (1) pay an application fee established by the board;
28 (2) complete an application for an apprentice permit established by
29 the board; and

30 (3) present evidence in a form acceptable to the board, demonstrating
31 that the applicant is enrolled in a sprinkler fitter apprenticeship
32 program.

33 (b) The sprinkler fitter apprentice permit shall state that it is
34 valid only if the person to whom it is issued remains enrolled in a
35 sprinkler fitter apprenticeship program. This permit shall be valid for
36 a period of three years from the date of issuance and may be renewed
37 once upon submission of a renewal application and a renewal fee deter-
38 mined by the board.

39 (c) To obtain a sprinkler fitter helper permit, an applicant must:

40 (1) pay an application fee established by the board;
41 (2) complete an application for a helper permit by the board; and
42 (3) present evidence in a form acceptable to the board demonstrating
43 that the applicant is employed as a sprinkler fitter helper that shall
44 include specific acknowledgement from the applicant and his or her
45 employer that the applicant is only authorized to work under the direct
46 supervision of a licensed sprinkler fitter.

47 (d) A sprinkler fitter helper permit shall state that the person
48 possessing it may only perform work on fire suppression systems under
49 the direct supervision of a licensed sprinkler fitter on a one-on-one
50 basis. This permit shall be valid for a period of eighteen months from
51 the date of issuance and shall not be eligible for renewal.

52 (e) Any person who is issued a sprinkler fitter apprentice or helper
53 permit shall be issued a photo identification card and shall maintain
54 such card in his or her possession at all times when performing work on
55 fire suppression systems.

1 § 936. Fire suppression system inspector. (a) To obtain a fire
2 suppression system inspector license, an applicant must:

3 (1) pay an application fee established by the board;

4 (2) complete an application for a fire suppression system inspector
5 license established by the board that provides evidence in a form
6 acceptable to the board of one of the following:

7 (A) at least two thousand hours of experience in the inspection of
8 fire suppression systems;

9 (B) completion of a sprinkler fitter apprenticeship program; or

10 (C) possession of a level one certificate from the national institute
11 for certification for engineering technologies for inspection and test-
12 ing for water based fire protection systems; and

13 (3) complete an examination established by the board for a fire
14 suppression system inspector.

15 (b) The board shall renew for a period of three years a fire
16 suppression system inspector license upon receiving a completed renewal
17 application and required fee as determined by the board.

18 (c) Any person who is issued a fire suppression system inspector
19 license shall be issued a photo identification card and shall maintain
20 such card in his or her possession at all times when performing
21 inspections on fire suppression systems.

22 § 937. Reciprocity. (a) The board may issue a reciprocity sprinkler
23 fitter license or fire suppression system inspector license, without
24 examination to any currently practicing, competent sprinkler fitter or
25 fire suppression system inspector who holds a similar authorization
26 granted by any other state according to the laws of such state which has
27 qualification requirements substantially similar to, or greater than,
28 those established under this article; provided that the other state
29 grants authorization to any competent person holding a license under
30 this article.

31 (b) The board may issue a sprinkler fitter license or fire suppression
32 system inspector license pursuant to this section to any person who:

33 (1) Completes an application for sprinkler fitter license or fire
34 suppression system inspector license by reciprocity established by the
35 board;

36 (2) Presents competent evidence in a form acceptable to the board
37 demonstrating that the applicant is a currently practicing, competent
38 person who holds a similar authorization granted by any other state
39 according to the laws of such state which has qualification requirements
40 substantially similar to, or greater than, those established under this
41 article; and

42 (3) Pays the appropriate fees established by the board.

43 § 938. Transitional grace period. (a) There shall be a one-year peri-
44 od from the effective date of this article that shall serve as a grace
45 period for all persons applying for sprinkler fitter licenses and fire
46 suppression inspector licenses.

47 (b) During the one-year grace period no person shall be required to
48 possess a sprinkler fitter license, apprentice or helper permit or fire
49 suppression system inspector license, provided he or she has submitted
50 the necessary application for such credentials within one hundred eighty
51 days from the effective date of this article.

52 (c) The board shall issue a sprinkler fitter license without examina-
53 tion to any person who submits an application for a sprinkler fitter
54 license during the one hundred eighty day period after the effective
55 date of this article, provided the applicant pays the required applica-
56 tion fee and submits evidence demonstrating he or she has:

(1) completed a sprinkler fitter apprenticeship program; or
(2) performed at least eight thousand hours of documented practical
experience of work on fire suppression systems within the past eight
years.

(d) The board shall issue a fire suppression inspector license without
examination to any person who submits an application for a fire
suppression inspector license during the one hundred eighty day period
after the effective date of this article, provided the applicant pays
the required application fee and submits evidence demonstrating he or
she has:

(1) At least two thousand hours of experience in the inspection of
fire suppression systems;

(2) Completion of a sprinkler fitter apprenticeship program; or

(3) Possession of a level one certificate from the national institute
for certification for engineering technologies for inspection and test-
ing for water based fire protection systems.

(e) Initial applications for sprinkler fitter apprentice or helper
permits shall be submitted by applicants within one hundred eighty days
from the effective date of this article in accordance with the require-
ments of section nine hundred thirty-five of this article.

§ 939. Registry of sprinkler fitter licenses and permits. (a) The
board shall establish a fire suppression system technician registry to
maintain a central registry of the names of all persons to whom it has
issued fire suppression system inspector licenses, sprinkler fitter
licenses and sprinkler fitter permits.

(b) The fire suppression system technician registry shall be main-
tained on a publicly accessible website and shall be updated on a month-
ly basis.

§ 940. Violations. It shall be unlawful and a violation of this arti-
cle for any person to:

(a) perform work on a fire suppression system without possessing an
applicable license or permit as required by this article;

(b) employ a person or cause or direct a person to perform work on a
fire suppression system unless the person performing such work holds an
applicable license or permit as required by this article;

(c) engage in other conduct prohibited by section nine hundred thir-
ty-three of this article;

(d) obtain a license or permit required by this article through fraud
or intentional or reckless misrepresentation;

(e) impersonate another person, use an expired or revoked license or
permit issued pursuant to this article or allow another person to use a
license or permit not issued to such person;

(f) give false or forged evidence of any kind to the board or any
member thereof in an application for the issuance or renewal of a
license or permit under this article; or

(g) knowingly or recklessly make a material false statement regarding
a person's license, or permit or status with intent to influence,
persuade, or induce an individual to contract for services regulated
under this article.

§ 941. Penalties. (a) The board shall revoke or suspend a license or
permit issued under this article, or reprimand a license or permit hold-
er for incompetence or any violation of this article or rules or regu-
lations of the board issued pursuant to this article.

(b) Any person who violates any provision of this article or any
applicable rule, regulation, permit or other order of the board shall be
subject to a civil penalty of not less than five hundred dollars and not

1 more than one thousand dollars for each act or violation. Each day a
2 person performs work on a fire suppression system without a required
3 license or permit as required by this article shall constitute a sepa-
4 rate violation.

5 (c) A person who willfully violates this article or any applicable
6 rule or regulation adopted pursuant to this article shall be guilty of a
7 misdemeanor.

8 (d) In addition to any other penalties provided in this section, a
9 person, corporation or other business entity that knowingly employs or
10 directs a person to perform work on a fire suppression system in
11 violation of this article shall forfeit any business or contractor
12 license, registration or certificate issued by the state for a period of
13 not less than one year and not more than three years, as determined by
14 the state attorney general. For purposes of this section, the term
15 "knowingly" shall mean actions that are willful or taken with deliberate
16 ignorance or reckless disregard of the requirements of this article.

17 § 942. Enforcement. (a) The requirements of this article will be
18 enforced by the board in conjunction with the licensure and certif-
19 ication unit within the department of labor.

20 (b) The licensure and certification unit within the department of
21 labor shall inspect project work sites where work on fire suppression
22 systems is being performed to ensure that persons performing such work
23 possess applicable licenses and permits required by this article.

24 (c) In any circumstances where the licensure and certification unit
25 within the department of labor determines that work on fire suppression
26 systems is being performed in violation of this article, it shall issue
27 or cause to be issued a stop work order requiring that all such work
28 cease and require that such work shall not be resumed until a full
29 investigation has been undertaken and verification has been made that
30 all work on the fire suppression system in question has been performed
31 by duly authorized persons.

32 § 943. Severability. To the extent that any section or portion of this
33 article is deemed invalid by a reviewing court, the remainder of this
34 article shall be unaffected by such ruling.

35 § 3. This act shall take effect on the one hundred eightieth day after
36 it shall have become a law. Effective immediately, the addition, amend-
37 ment and/or repeal of any rule or regulation necessary for the implemen-
38 tation of this act on its effective date are authorized to be made and
39 completed on or before such effective date.