
MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF LABOR TESTIMONY ON SB0263

TO: Senate Education, Energy, and Environment Committee
DATE: 1/30/25
BILL: **SB0263 - Board of Heating, Ventilation, Air-Conditioning, and Refrigeration Contractors – Application for License Restoration**

MDL POSITION: Support

This proposal extends the grace period for renewal of HVACR licenses, extending the time allowed for license renewal from 90 days to 4 years. This extension will provide greater flexibility for HVACR professionals while maintaining the necessary regulatory oversight to ensure public safety and industry standards.

The current 90 day grace period is inconsistent with the policies of other Boards within the Mechanical Licensing Unit (e.g. Electricians, Plumbing), as most Boards allow for a re-examination period of two to four years. Under the current system, an individual whose license has expired for 91 days is treated the same as someone whose license has expired for five years.

The selection of 4 years is not arbitrary as it aligns with the adoption of the industry code cycles. An individual whose license expired less than four years ago will have been working within the current code cycle, meaning their training and knowledge are still up-to-date. However, for those whose licenses have expired for more than four years, it is important to ensure they are brought up to speed with the latest code updates and requirements and thus requiring them to undergo all of the licensure requirements is justifiable.

The process for renewing an expired license can be time-consuming, involving several steps that can result in significant delays, particularly for those working a full-time job. MD Labor feels that providing additional flexibility in the renewal process brings parity to this profession, provides adequate time for the skilled professional to complete the renewal, and still ensures industry safety and oversight.

Under Maryland's current statute, individuals are required to retake the licensing exam if their HVACR license has expired for more than 90 days, regardless of the reason for expiration. The process begins when an individual applies to the Board's testing vendor, PSI Exams, as though

they were a new applicant. PSI reviews the application for completeness before forwarding it to the Board for evaluation. However, the Board's Application Review Committee only meets once a month. If an application arrives just after a meeting, it could remain in limbo for up to another month before it is reviewed. Once the Board has reviewed and approved the application, they notify PSI Exams, and the applicant can then schedule their exam at one of the six testing sites in Maryland. Due to limited availability at these sites, applicants often experience delays in securing an exam slot, further extending the timeline.

Step two involves the applicant taking and passing the exam, after which they must return to the Board to apply for license renewal. While the renewal application is submitted online, it requires additional steps before it is finalized, including a process to release the license for printing. This additional step adds even more time to an already lengthy process.

By extending the renewal period from 90 days to four years, individuals who are currently employed can return to work within days, rather than facing months of delay. This change benefits both technicians and their employers. Employers, who may otherwise be reluctant to wait for the lengthy renewal process, could be at risk of losing valuable personnel if a technician's license lapses. Similarly, technicians may face difficulties securing new employment due to the invalidity of their licenses. The proposed extension addresses both challenges by ensuring a more efficient and timely renewal process.

To that end, MD Labor respectfully requests the Committee consider a favorable report on SB0263.

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