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NH GAS FITTERS' LAW KNOWN AS AMILIA'S LAW (HB1711)

This information is a brief summary of the implementation status for the gas fitters licensing law. The law was passed by the legislature in the last session and signed into law by the governor on May 31, 2006. The effective date of the law is January 1, 2007. The NH Heating Technicians Advisory Committee is charged by the law to advise and assist the State Fire Marshal in the development of the administrative rules to implement the program.

The law does take effect on January 1, 2007 and during the course of the year the licensing program will be ramped up. We have submitted job descriptions for the inspectors for approval by the State Division of Personnel. These experts in the mechanical field will serve to administer and provide advisory services to the public, industry and code officials.

The current law in NH is that all gas installations shall meet NFPA 54 National Fuel Gas Code. This code will continue to be the document used by industry and code officials for these installations. During this first year code officials will have to continue to enforce the section of NFPA 54 that only qualified persons can install and maintain gas utilization equipment in the manner they have in the past. The licensing program will ease the burden on these officials and also that of the technician in demonstrating their qualifications as required by the code. On or before January 1, 2008 all technicians should have a license in their possession issued by the State of New Hampshire. The penalties of this law shall not apply until after one calendar year following the effective date of rules first adopted by HB 1711.

The law does allow for technicians certified under the voluntary program the ability to transfer to the mandatory licensing program. This section also gives them one year from the adoption of the rules to become licensed.

The committee has met several times and received many constructive comments from the public that have served to improve the direction that the rules development is heading. These rules are in a rough draft form and not ready for adoption or distribution. We are working to complete the formatting and provide these back to the committee within the next few weeks for review and comment.

The rule making process allows for public input both verbally and in writing. When the rules are ready to be proposed for adoption these hearings will be posted to allow time for this important part of the process. This should take place by the end of the year. The notices for the hearing will be posted as required by state law, but will also be distributed to the industry in the same manner that you are receiving this memo.

We will continue work with the committee comprised of industry experts and to post developments on our web site http://www.nh.gov/safety/divisions/firesafety/index.html.