

The Florida Senate
BILL ANALYSIS AND FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT

(This document is based on the provisions contained in the legislation as of the latest date listed below.)

Prepared By: The Professional Staff of the Committee on Regulated Industries

BILL: SB 1372

INTRODUCER: Senator Perry

SUBJECT: Electrical and Alarm System Contracting

DATE: April 3, 2017

REVISED: _____

	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR	REFERENCE	ACTION
1.	Kraemer	McSwain	RI	Pre-meeting
2.			CA	
3.			RC	

I. Summary:

SB 1372 authorizes certified electrical contractors and certified alarm system contractors (certified contractors) to:

- Act as prime contractors on a project when the majority of the contracted work is within the scope of the certified contractor's license; or
- Subcontract to other licensed contractors any contracted work on a project that is outside the scope of the certified contractor's license.

The bill mirrors current law in part I of ch. 489, F.S., which authorizes prime contracting and subcontracting by construction contractors.

The bill has no fiscal impact on state government. *See* Section V. Fiscal Impact Statement.

The bill provides for an effective date of July 1, 2017.

II. Present Situation:

Construction Contracting

Chapter 489, F.S., dealing with construction contracting, provides for the regulation of contractors based on the type of contracting engaged in by the contractor. Part I of ch. 489, F.S., relating to construction contracting, addresses regulation of the construction industry.¹ Part II of ch. 489, F.S., deals with the licensing of electrical and alarm system contractors.²

¹ *See* ss. 489.101-489.146, F.S.

² *See* ss. 489.501-489.538, F.S. Part III, dealing with registration of septic tank contractors is not relevant to SB 822; *see* ss. 489.551-489.558, F.S.

Construction Contracting

The Construction Industry Licensing Board (CILB) within the Department of Business and Professional Regulation (DBPR) is responsible for licensing and regulating the construction industry in this state.³ The CILB is divided into two divisions with separate jurisdictions:

- Division I is comprised of the general contractor, building contractor, and residential contractor members of the CILB. Division I has jurisdiction over the regulation of general contractors, building contractors, and residential contractors.
- Division II is comprised of the roofing contractor, sheet metal contractor, air-conditioning contractor, mechanical contractor, pool contractor, plumbing contractor, and underground utility and excavation contractor members of the CILB. Division II has jurisdiction over the regulation of roofing contractors, sheet metal contractors, class A, B, and C air-conditioning contractors, mechanical contractors, commercial pool/spa contractors, residential pool/spa contractors, swimming pool/spa servicing contractors, plumbing contractors, underground utility and excavation contractors, solar contractors, and pollutant storage systems contractors.

A specialty contractor is one whose scope of work and responsibility is limited to a particular phase of construction as detailed in an administrative rule adopted by the CILB. Jurisdiction is dependent on the scope of work and whether Division I or Division II has jurisdiction over such work in accordance with the applicable administrative rule.⁴

The CILB is authorized to:

- Reprimand or place licensees on probation;
- Revoke, suspend, or deny the issuance or renewal of a certificate or registration;
- Require financial restitution to a consumer for financial harm directly related to a violation;
- Impose an administrative fine not to exceed \$10,000 per violation;
- Require continuing education; or
- Assess costs associated with investigation and prosecution.⁵

Electrical and Alarm System Contracting

Part II of ch. 489, F.S., dealing with electrical and alarm system contracting, sets forth requirements for qualified persons to be licensed if they have sufficient technical expertise in the applicable trade, and have been tested on technical and business matters.⁶ The Electrical Contractors' Licensing Board (ECLB) in the DBPR implements part II of ch. 489, F.S.⁷

An alarm system is “any electrical device, signaling device, or combination of electrical devices used to signal or detect a burglary, fire, robbery, or medical emergency.”⁸ An alarm system includes home-automation equipment, thermostats, and video cameras.⁹

³ See s. 489.107, F.S.

⁴ See, for example, Fla. Admin. Code R. 61G4-15.032 (2016), dealing with the various types of pool/spa contractors.

⁵ See s. 489.129(1)(a) - (q), F.S., for the acts that may result in the imposition of discipline by the CILB.

⁶ See s. 489.501, F.S.

⁷ See ss. 489.507 through 489.517, F.S., concerning the powers and duties of the ECLB.

⁸ See s. 489.505(1), F.S.

⁹ See s. 553.793(1)(b), F.S.

Section 489.505, F.S., specifies the types of contractors that may lay out, fabricate, install, maintain, alter, repair, monitor, inspect, replace or service alarm systems. An alarm system contractor is a person whose business includes the execution of contracts requiring the ability, experience, science, knowledge, and skill to conduct all alarm services for compensation, for all types of alarm systems for all purposes.¹⁰ The term also includes any person, firm, or corporation that engages in the business of alarm contracting under an expressed or implied contract or that undertakes, offers to undertake, or submits a bid to engage in the business of alarm contracting.¹¹ An alarm system contractor whose business includes all types of alarm systems for all purposes is designated as an “alarm system contractor I;” the practice area of an “alarm system contractor II” is identical except that it does not include fire alarm systems.¹²

The DBPR may also issue geographically unlimited certificates of competency to an alarm system contractor (certificateholder).¹³ The scope of certification is limited to specific alarm circuits and equipment.¹⁴ No mandatory licensure requirement is created by the availability of a certification.¹⁵

Authority to Act as Prime Contractor, or to Subcontract Work

Pursuant to s. 489.113((9)(a), F.S., no provision in part I of ch. 489, F.S., prevents any contractor from acting as a prime contractor¹⁶ where the majority of the work to be performed under the contract is within the scope of his or her license, or from subcontracting to other licensed contractors work that is part of the project.

III. Effect of Proposed Changes:

SB 1372 amends s. 489.516, F.S., to provide that no provision in part II, ch. 489, dealing with electrical contracting and alarm system contracting, may prevent certified electrical contractors and certified alarm system contractors (certified contractors) from:

- Acting as prime contractors on a project when the majority of the contracted work is within the scope of the certified contractor’s license; or

¹⁰ See s. 489.505(2), F.S.

¹¹ *Id.*

¹² See s. 489.505(2)(a) and (b), F.S.

¹³ See ss. 489.505(4), 489.505(5), and 489.515(1), F.S.

¹⁴ Section 489.505(7), F.S., describes the limitations on the scope of a certificate of competency as those circuits originating in alarm control panels, equipment governed by the Articles 725, 760, 770, 800, and 810 of the National Electrical Code, Current Edition, and National Fire Protection Association Standard 72, Current Edition, as well as the installation, repair, fabrication, erection, alteration, addition, or design of electrical wiring, fixtures, appliances, thermostats, apparatus, raceways, and conduit, or any part thereof not to exceed 98 volts (RMS), when those items are for the purpose of transmitting data or proprietary video (satellite systems that are not part of a community antenna television or radio distribution system) or providing central vacuum capability or electric locks. RMS is the abbreviation for “root mean square,” a statistical term defined as the square root of mean square. See <http://www.practicalphysics.org/explaining-rms-voltage-and-current.html> (last visited Mar. 29, 2017).

¹⁵ *Id.*

¹⁶ A “prime contractor” is a contractor who has contracted with an owner of a project and has full responsibility for its completion; a prime contractor agrees to perform a complete contract, and may employ (and manage) one or more subcontractors to carry out specific parts of the contract. See <http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/prime-contractor.html> (last visited Mar. 29, 2017).

- Subcontracting to other licensed contractors any contracted work on a project that is outside the scope of the certified contractor's license.

The bill mirrors s. 489.113(9)(a), F.S., under part I of ch. 489, F.S., which is expressly limited to construction contracting under part I of ch. 489, F.S. The DBPR and the CILB have applied s. 489.113(9)(a), F.S. to electrical and alarm system licensees regulated under part II of ch. 489, F.S.¹⁷

The bill provides for an effective date of July 1, 2017.

IV. Constitutional Issues:

A. Municipality/County Mandates Restrictions:

None.

B. Public Records/Open Meetings Issues:

None.

C. Trust Funds Restrictions:

None.

V. Fiscal Impact Statement:

A. Tax/Fee Issues:

None.

B. Private Sector Impact:

SB 1372 provides clear statutory authority for electrical and alarm system contractors to act as prime contractors and to subcontract work, as currently permitted in accordance with the administrative interpretation by the DBPR and the CILB of the applicability of s. 489.113(9)(a), F.S. to such contractors. The authorization benefits affected electrical and alarm system contractors if they were burdened with higher insurance rates due to the uncertainty created by the administrative interpretation by the DBPR and the CILB.

C. Government Sector Impact:

The DBPR notes that the bill has no fiscal impact on state government.¹⁸

¹⁷ See 2017 Agency Legislative Bill Analysis (AGENCY: Department of Business and Professional Regulation) for HB 227 (identical to SB 1372), dated Feb. 15, 2017 (on file with Senate Committee on Regulated Industries) at page 2.

¹⁸ *Id.* at page 3.

VI. Technical Deficiencies:

None.

VII. Related Issues:

None.

VIII. Statutes Affected:

This bill substantially amends section 489.516 of the Florida Statutes.

IX. Additional Information:

A. Committee Substitute – Statement of Changes:

(Summarizing differences between the Committee Substitute and the prior version of the bill.)

None.

B. Amendments:

None.