

Apartment Maintenance Licensing

Occupational licensing laws are typically enacted under the guise of improving quality or public safety, but this argument rarely holds up to scrutiny. Research has shown that tougher professional licensing regulations are not indicative of quality service being rendered.¹ In many cases licensure requirements drive up costs for consumers, act as a barrier to entry into the labor force, and limit mobility of individuals who must obtain a professional license.²

In the context of the apartment industry, states often require property maintenance staff to submit to licensing requirements when they perform routine maintenance on a community's electrical, plumbing, and HVAC systems.³ From the perspective of labor unions and their advocates, licensure laws and regulations protect the work of tradesmen who are highly trained to perform extensive work such as a major electrical installation. Whereas, apartment maintenance staff should be exempt from such requirements because their duties are far more limited in scope. Maintenance technicians perform more basic tasks that one would typically associate with a handyman, such as unclogging a drain.

While the specifics of exemption coverage vary among states, a clear majority have determined that electrical, plumbing and HVAC licensing is unnecessary for property maintenance staff. Elected officials should reject attempts to expand licensing requirements to apartment maintenance staff. In states that require licensure, legislators should consider enacting exemptions for maintenance staff or allow certification for maintenance professionals through qualifying programs, such as NAA's Certification for Apartment Maintenance Technicians (CAMT). Additionally, licensing agencies should consider entering into reciprocity agreements with other states to ensure licensed professionals are not subject to duplicative requirements.

Maintenance professionals do not need to be under the scrutiny of licensing agencies as the industry is self-regulating. Through their membership to NAA and its affiliates, apartment owners and management firms invest in their staffs for the long-term, promoting and enforcing high standards of personal conduct and operational expertise through NAA's nationally recognized CAMT

¹ U.S. Department of Treasury-Office of Economic Policy, White House Council of Economic Advisors and US Department of Labor, The White House, *A Framework for Policymakers*; Morris M. Kliener, Brookings Institution-The Hamilton Project, *Reforming Occupational Licensure Policies*

² Collin Roth, Wisconsin Institute for Law & Liberty, *Fencing Out Opportunity: Occupational Licensing in the Badger State*; U.S. Department of Treasury-Office of Economic Policy, White House Council of Economic Advisors and US Department of Labor, The White House, *A Framework for Policymakers*; National Conference of State Legislatures, *The State of Occupational Licensing: Research, State Policies and Trends*

³ Also, see NAA's Property Manager/ Leasing Agent Licensing Fact Sheet.

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program.⁴ CAMT certifies maintenance technicians in electrical, HVAC, plumbing and mechanical repairs, along with other applicable skills. Maintenance professionals are incentivized and trained to perform high quality work without licensure requirements.

The apartment industry is already highly regulated by federal, state and local laws and numerous regulatory agencies which govern apartment leasing and property management. Mandating licensure for apartment property staff is redundant, expensive, unnecessary, and increases costs for consumers.

NAA Viewpoint NAA urges lawmakers to reject proposals that require licensing of property maintenance staff, and instead consider less burdensome approaches such as allowing certification through qualifying programs, such as CAMT.

⁴ The NAA CAMT certification is accredited by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI), which is a private nonprofit organization that administers and coordinates the U.S. voluntary standardization and conformity assessment system.