

Home Owners Applying For Electrical Permits

The purpose of this bulletin is to provide information to home owners planning to do electrical work in their own home. Prior to obtaining an electrical permit, please read this bulletin and the “Electrical Safety Home Owner Information Guide” publication also available at the Building Division front counter.

Home Owner Permits

According to the Electrical Safety Act, B.C. Reg. 487/95, a permit may only be issued to the registered owner of a detached single family dwelling. If the dwelling is not yet constructed, the registered owner must live in the dwelling for a minimum of six (6) months after an occupancy permit has been issued. A “for sale” sign put up during construction will void a homeowner electrical permit. Permits cannot be issued to home owners for work in townhouses, duplexes, or dwellings containing secondary suites. The maximum amperage of electrical service under a home owner permit is 200 Amp.

Satisfactory knowledge of electrical installations is required. If you are not knowledgeable in electrical installations, acquire the services of a certified electrical contractor to obtain an electrical permit and to do the work. If a home owner permit is issued, all the electrical work must be performed by the registered owner. Assistance may be obtained from qualified persons not under contract and who do not receive payment or benefit of any kind. You must provide the name and phone number of any person(s) assisting you with the electrical work.

Prior to obtaining an electrical permit

- Ensure that you are familiar with the B.C. Electrical Code, wiring methods, and building construction before undertaking the electrical installation. Improperly installed electrical equipment can create a hazard to life and property.
- Provide the basic information relating to the installation (conductor and circuit breaker sizes, circuitry sketch for electric heating, cost of materials, etc.) when applying for an electrical permit.
- If you require a service connection or if alterations are to be made to your electrical service, contact B.C. Hydro & Power Authority (543-6000) for servicing requirements prior to applying for the electrical permit.
Note: The Electrical Code requires all service conduit or cable to be located outside finished walls. Your panel must be located as close as possible to the meter base.

When to Obtain an Electrical Permit

Do not obtain an electrical permit until you are ready to begin work. The electrical permit expires if:

- the installation has not commenced within sixty (60) days of the date of its issuance; or
- the work is not completed in a period of one hundred and eighty (180) days.

In certain cases, supplementary permits or extensions to the permit may be issued. An additional permit fee would be required in these cases.

Electrical Inspections

Electrical equipment and wiring shall not be covered or energized until accepted by the Electrical Inspector. To obtain this acceptance, regulations require that you notify this office and request inspection when the installation is ready for inspection. If an inspection request is made before 3:00 p.m., the inspection is normally conducted the next working day. A 24-hour inspection request line can be reached by dialing 591-4240.

1. Rough Wiring Inspection

A rough wiring inspection is required where wiring is to be covered underground or inside the building construction. All wiring should be installed in the outlet boxes and circuit splicing must be completed. New circuits should not be connected to the circuit breaker at this time. The Electrical Inspector will post an Electrical Inspection Notice advising of the acceptance of the rough wiring or noting items to be corrected.

If the installation is accepted, the electrical wiring may be covered by insulation, interior sheathing, backfilling of trenches, or pouring of concrete may proceed, subject to fulfillment of any other Building Department requirements, i.e., building, plumbing, etc.

If the installation is not accepted, the notice will list the items that need to be rectified. A rough wiring inspection will need to be requested again. Note: Please go over the installation carefully prior to calling for inspection. Repeated or serious deficiencies may result in reinspection fees or a request that the services of an Electrical Contractor be obtained to complete your project.

2. Final Inspection

Final inspection may be requested when the electrical installation is complete, although other aspects of the building may not be complete. All switches, receptacles, baseboard heaters, built-in appliances, etc., should be installed, the branch circuits should be connected to the circuit breakers and the circuit directory should be completed. The Electrical Inspector will post an Electrical Inspection Notice advising of the acceptance or rejection of the complete installation. If the installation is accepted, the notice will advise accordingly. If the installation is rejected, the notice will list the objections that need to be rectified prior to calling for reinspection.

Note: In some instances, it may be possible to obtain both rough wiring and final inspections at the same time.

For more information or assistance please call the Electrical Section at 591-4155.