

September, 2013
ELECTRICAL SECTION

HOMEOWNER ELECTRICAL INSTALLATION PERMIT

There are several reasons why a homeowner may choose to perform electrical work in their own home. For the right person, home wiring can be a very rewarding experience. Unfortunately, for others it can become more than they bargained for and quickly develop into a very stressful, costly and possibly hazardous undertaking. Before you begin you must first acknowledge your comfort level and experience with performing electrical work. Non-compliant electrical installations may create both shock and fire hazards. The public perception of "household voltage" is that it's not dangerous. Unfortunately, many individuals have been seriously or fatally injured by electrical shocks and fires associated with only 120 volts to ground (normal household voltage).

Your home may be your single most valuable investment. Regardless, your home is the place you and your family live, play and sleep in. Property can be repaired, belonging replaced, but not all damage caused by electrical related fires can be repaired or forgotten.

Please review the information in the package prior to making your final decision on whether a Homeowners Electrical Installation Permit is the right choice for you. You may decide, after review, that you would rather hire the services of a Licensed Electrical Contractor to perform the electrical work in your home. To find a Licensed Electrical Contractor please visit the BC Safety Authority website at www.safetyauthority.ca.

This Guideline is broken down into the following sections:

- Do I Qualify For a Homeowner Electrical Permit?
- What Are My Responsibilities?
- Application Process
- Performing Electrical Work
- Inspection Process
- FAQ

DO I QUALIFY FOR A HOMEOWNER ELECTRICAL PERMIT?

A Homeowner Electrical Installation Permit will only be issued by the City of Surrey to those individuals that meet the minimum required qualifications as defined below:

1. The applicant is the registered owner of the property;
2. The registered owner occupies or intends to occupy the home (if not yet constructed and registered owner must live in the home for a minimum of six (6) months from the date occupancy was granted);
3. The electrical work is performed by the registered owner without assistance (or with the assistance of qualified persons not under contract or for remuneration of any kind) A qualified person with respect to homeowner permit issuance is a person that has knowledge of the electrical system and equipment being installed and is aware of the hazards involved;
4. The electrical work is in a fully detached single family dwelling. This excludes a condo, apartment, townhouse, duplex or similar dwelling ;
5. The dwelling does not contain a secondary suite, daycare or other business enterprise;
6. The applicant can show satisfactory evidence to the City of Surrey's Electrical Section knowledge of the electrical installation;
7. The scope of work involves installations to a maximum of 200 amps and 150 volts to ground;
8. The scope of work does not include wiring associated with a swimming pool;
9. The scope of work does not include electrical in floor heating system.

WHAT ARE MY RESPONSIBILITIES?

1. As the permit holder, you are responsible to ensure all electrical work performed is compliant with the Safety Standards Act and Regulations of BC. The City of Surrey does not provide the services of a Licensed Electrical Contractor.

What does this mean?

The City of Surrey and its Safety Officers (Inspectors) do not design installations nor instruct individuals on how to perform electrical work. It is a common misconception that the Electrical Safety Officer's role is to instruct the homeowner on "how to wire", but this is not the case. You as the permit holder are responsible to ensure the installation "meets code", request inspections, and abide by all the terms and conditions placed on your permit. The Electrical Safety Officers role is to monitor you and the installation for compliance. If a non-compliance is deemed serious in nature then the Electrical Safety Officer will be required to suspend your permit and issue a Compliance Order requesting the services of a Licensed Electrical Contractor be obtained to complete the work.

2. As the permit holder, you are responsible to ensure you and any persons named on the permit are familiar with the following:
 - Safety Standards Act.
 - Safety Standards General Regulations.
 - Electrical Safety Regulation.
 - BC Electrical Code.
 - BC Safety Authority Directives
 - BC Safety Authority Information Bulletins.
 - BC Safety Authority's "Homeowner Information Guide Electrical Safety"
3. As the permit holder, you are responsible to ensure compliance with BC Hydro's requirements. This may include but not be limited to:
 - BC Hydro Requirements for Secondary Voltage Revenue Metering (750 V and less)
 - BC Hydro Overhead Service Declaration Form and Site Requirements
 - BC Hydro Underground Service Declaration Form and Site Requirements
4. As the permit holder, you are responsible to arrange any coordination with BC Hydro and the City of Surrey for service disconnection and or tentative reconnection.
5. As the permit holder, you are responsible to ensure all electrical work is performed and left in a safe manner; **Homeowners are not allowed to work on energized systems or equipment.**

APPLICATION PROCESS

Homeowner Electrical Installation Permit application packages are available for pick up at City Hall or online. Please visit the City of Surrey website at www.surrey.ca to download an online version of the Homeowners Electrical Installation Permit application.

All new service connections or service upgrades must include a service demand calculation attached to the Homeowner Electrical Permit Application.

By signing the Homeowner Electrical Permit application you are agreeing to all terms and conditions assigned to the permit. It is important you read all terms and conditions thoroughly.

A Safety Officer will review your application and contact you to confirm the information stated on the permit and your level of knowledge of your electrical system. If satisfied, the Safety Officer will issue the Homeowners Electrical Permit. **It is un-lawful to perform electrical work prior to your permit being issued**

PERFORMING ELECTRICAL WORK

Once your permit has been issued you are then authorized to perform electrical work in your home.

Failure to comply with the following information will result in immediate suspension of your permit and a Compliance Order will be left ordering you obtain the service of a Licensed Electrical Contractor to ensure your homes electrical system is safe and to complete any required electrical work:

1. Under no circumstances is a homeowner, or those assisting a homeowner, permitted to work on an energized system or equipment. If you are working on the main service box you must arrange for BC Hydro to disconnect power to the system. Please contact your Safety Officer to discuss your options.
2. Only those persons named on the permit may assist you. You are not permitted to offer any remuneration (payment) to those who are assisting you.
3. No electrical work can be covered or energized without written approval from the City of Surrey's Electrical Section. Written approval (Certificate of Inspection) can only be granted after an inspection has been performed by a Safety Officer. Any work covered without approval will be required to be exposed for inspection.
4. An inspection must be requested within 60 days from the date of issuance of your permit and a final inspection within a further 180 days. If you do not request an inspection within this time frame your permit will expire. An additional fee will apply to extend your permit.
5. You are responsible to ensure you and all electrical work performed is compliant with the Safety Standards Act. As the Area Having Jurisdiction, the City Of Surrey will monitor you and the installation for compliance. If upon inspection it is discovered that you or those assisting you do not have proper knowledge of the electrical system, code requirements, and or safe working practices the permit will be cancelled.

INSPECTION PROCESS

An Inspection must be performed by an Electrical Safety Officer before you can cover any rough wiring or connect any electrical wiring to a source of power. Generally, you will be requesting three types of inspections:

Service Inspection

This is the inspection of the main electrical service that is going to be connected to BC Hydro. Under no circumstance is it acceptable for the permit holder to disconnect or re-connect the electrical service from BC Hydro conductors (this includes pulling the electrical meter from the meter base). **ALL SERVICE CONNECTIONS MUST BE APPROVED BY THE CITY OF SURREY PRIOR TO CONNECTION BY BC HYDRO.** Please discuss options for service repairs and upgrades with your Electrical Safety Officer prior to arranging a disconnection with BC Hydro.

Rough Wire Inspection

This inspection is required for any regulated work prior to covering and or connection to a source of power. Before requesting a rough wire inspections please ensure:

1. All regulated work is exposed for inspection (rough wire, underground raceway, in slab raceway etc.);
2. All splicing is complete including bonding connection;
3. All branch wiring must be terminated in electrical panel. (Homeowners are not approved to work in energized electrical panels);
4. Branch circuits are not connected to over current devices (breakers);
5. Receptacles, switches and luminaires are not installed; and
6. Branch circuits are not connected to a source of power. Branch circuits must be approved by Electrical Safety Officer before energizing.

Final Inspection

Once "all work is complete" you may request a final inspection. Note, "all work complete" refers to the electrical portion of your project only. During final inspection please ensure the following:

1. All receptacles, switches, luminaires and cover plates are installed;
2. All branch circuits are connected to the over current device (breaker) which are in the "off position"; and
3. Legible and accurate panel directory is installed.

Requesting an Inspection

Once you are ready for an inspection you must fill out an ELECTRICAL HOMEOWNER INSPECTION REQUEST form. It is very important that this form is filled in accurately and with as much detail as possible. If you have any questions regarding this form please contact your Inspection Area's Electrical Safety Officer to discuss.

The three options for requesting an inspection are as follows:

- Option #1 **FAX-IN** a copy of your ELECTRICAL HOMEOWNER INSPECTION REQUEST form to 604-591-4440. All inspection requests received before 3:00pm will be scheduled for the next business day.
- Option #2 **DROP OFF** your ELECTRICAL HOMEOWNER INSPECTION REQUEST form at the Building Department front counter located inside City Hall. All inspection requests received before 3:00pm will be scheduled for the next business day.
- Option #3 **CALL- IN** your inspection request at 604-591-4240. **If you choose to call in your inspection request you must leave an ELECTRICAL HOMEOWNER INSPECTION REQUEST form on site at the main electrical panel.** All inspection requests received before 3:00pm will be scheduled for the next business day.
- Option #4 EMAIL a scanned version of you ELECTRICAL HOMEOWNER INSPECTION REQUEST form to e.inspections@surrey.ca.

Inspection Day

You are responsible to ensure the Safety Officer has access to perform the requested inspection. If an appointment is required, you must call your Electrical Safety Officer the morning of your inspection between the hours of 8:30am and 9:15am to schedule. If an appointment has not been pre-arrange it will be assumed access will be provided between the hours of 9:30 am and 4:00pm. **Note: the Safety Officer will not enter a premise that contains personal belonging unless and adult 18 years of age or older is present.**

Once the inspection has been completed, the Safety Officer will leave a Certificate of Inspection on site. The Certificate of Inspection will indicate if the regulated work performed is accepted by the City of Surrey. If the installation is not accepted, a list of non-compliances (deficiencies) will be attached to the Certificate of Inspection. It is the permit holders' responsibility to correct the indicated non-compliances prior to requesting another inspection.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is a Homeowners Electrical Permit?

A Homeowners Electrical Permit is written permission from the City of Surrey that allows you to perform electrical work in your fully detached single family dwelling.

My home contains a suite, am I eligible for a Homeowners Electrical Permit?

No.

My home is a townhouse, am I eligible for a Homeowners Electrical Permit?

No.

My home contains a business, am I eligible for a Homeowners Electrical Permit?

No.

My home is a duplex, am I eligible for a Homeowners Electrical Permit?

No.

I want to hire my friend who is an electrician to help me with the wiring in my home, am I eligible for a Homeowners Electrical Permit?

No. You are not allowed to offer remuneration to anyone assisting you. In this situation your friend is acting as a Contractor and would be required to be licensed as such.

My homes main electrical service is greater than 200 amps, am I eligible for a Homeowners Electrical Permit?

No.