

Residential Electrical Permits

In the province of Alberta, according to the Alberta Safety Codes act and permit regulations, you are required to have an electrical permit to install, alter or add to an electrical system. This means for example if you are planning to build a garage that will have electrical wiring or development a basement, you need an electrical permit. Now that I got that bit of information out of the way, lets talk reality.

Home owners today are no different than previous generations, we all strive to accomplish the most for the smallest cost. So we read books or watch You Tube in an effort to gather enough knowledge to take on home projects ourselves. Then with all this new found wisdom and some new shiny tools, we set forth to build a better world for our selves and our families. This is where we sometimes forget to look after the little items that mean so much, the permits. Since were talking permits, don't forget the fact that you also require a building or development permit for all construction projects,.... just saying.



An electrical permit can be gained in 2 ways. As a home owner, living in the house where the project will be done, you can apply to your local authority or city, and get a "home owners permit". This means you will be responsible for doing the work yourself and will ensure that the installation meets todays electrical code requirements.

The second way of acquiring an electrical permit is to hire a reputable electrical contractor to complete the work for you. Ask for a copy of the electrical permit at the beginning of the job and get a copy of the city electrical inspectors reports. There will be 2 electrical inspections and reports, a **rough-in inspection**, the one prior to installing the drywall, and the **final inspection**, done after everything is finished. Be aware that in some areas, there is a hefty fee imposed by the city if one of these inspections fail and the inspector has to return to reinspect after deficiencies have been corrected.

In the 2015 Canadian Electrical Code Part 1, 23rd Edition, effective January 1st 2016, there have been some major changes that will drastically change the way you install electrical wiring in your home. If you are unaware of the changes, it will cost you dearly, trust me.

In my experience, it is safe to say that the majority of basement developments and garages built by home owners, are done without electrical permits. I have been told by the underwriters from one of the local home insurance companies that "if an electrical permit is not taken out for a project and there was a fire, the home owners policy may be void". That's a scary situation to be in simply because you forgot or wanted to save a few dollars for the permit. When it comes time to sell your home, you might get caught because buyers today are asking sellers to provide permits for developed basements.