
Electrical Operating Permits: What Are They And Do I Need One?

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Do you know that as a building owner or strata manager, obtaining an Electrical Operating permit from Technical Safety BC could save you time and money?

Obtaining an operating permit provides the building owner or strata manager permission to install new equipment, relocate equipment, or make minor alterations to the electrical equipment or facility such as adding lighting, wiring or plugs, without having to take out multiple electrical installation permits.

Here, we answer some common questions about electrical operating permits.

What kind of equipment warrants an electrical operating permit?

If you own, operate, or maintain the following electrical equipment, you must have an operating permit when:

- operation or design of electrical equipment requires regular or ongoing maintenance
- supply to privately owned equipment is greater than 750 volts (except for high voltage neon signs)
- equipment is operated or maintained for emergency service and/or is part of a fire alarm system
- rated service capacity of equipment as per the manufacturer's nameplate rating is capable of handling electrical supply of over 250 kVA (e.g. main service switch, main transforming equipment, electrical panel, or transformer)
- equipment is operated within the class or zone designations for hazardous locations.

Who issues an electrical operating permit?

Technical Safety BC issues electrical operating permits and completes inspections for most areas of British Columbia, but there are several exceptions including City of Vancouver, City of Burnaby, City of Kelowna. Contact Technical Safety BC to learn more or search 'Jurisdiction; on our website.

What are the limits of permitted alterations?

With an operating permit, facilities with a main service rating of 250 kVA or less can make alterations that do not result in an increase of greater than 12.5 kVA in additional loads.

Facilities with a main service rating of 250 kVA or greater can make minor alterations that does not result in an increase of greater than 36 kVA in additional loads.

What is the role of a Field Safety Representative (FSR)?

An electrical FSR is a professionally-qualified individual who is certified by Technical Safety BC, and they are named on every electrical operating permit. They can validate completed electrical work and can provide assurance that the electrical equipment has been safely installed and is being properly maintained.

What type of minor alterations or additions are included within the scope of an electrical operating permit?

Under the supervision of a FSR, owners can conduct regular maintenance work, including:

- replacement of existing equipment with equipment intended to perform the same function; and
- installation, relocation, and alteration of electrical equipment that is subject to the

conditions set out in Section G of Directive D-E3 070801 7, Electrical Operating Permit Requirements.

- Maintenance work is not allowed to result in the main service capacity being exceeded. Load calculations must be entered into the log book.

Can I change my FSR during the duration of the permit?

Yes. FSRs can be changed at any time. However, if you have an operating permit and your FSR has changed, you must let Technical Safety BC know.

How do I get an operating permit from Technical Safety BC?

Clients registered for our online services can apply for an operating permit online or can complete and submit the Electrical Operating Permit Application Form, available through technicalsaftybc.ca. Operating permits are renewed annually.

Research has shown that an equipment operated under a permit is four times less likely to develop a hazardous situation. Check with your contractor or electrician to determine if your equipment or facility needs an annual operating permit.

If you are in doubt, have more questions or want help in pulling a permit, visit our website at technicalsaftybc.ca, call us at 1 866 566 7233, or email contact@technicalsaftybc.ca.