

Electrical Annual Permit (Operating Permit)

The intent of this bulletin is to clarify provisions of the Vancouver Electrical By-law No.5563 (VEBL) with respect to the annual permit requirements for the maintenance and operation of electrical equipment.

Overview

The Safety Standards Act, defines **regulated work**, in part to mean the installation, alteration, operation, testing, or maintenance of a **regulated product**, and describes that this Act and the regulations apply to the **regulated product** as defined in the regulations, in part, as electrical equipment. Safety Standards General Regulation, Section 18 (1) states that a person must have an operating permit to do any of the following: (a) operate a **regulated product**; (b) maintain a **regulated product**.

The caption “**Maintenance and operation**” Rule 2-300(1) & (2) of the Canadian Electrical Code, Part I (CE Code) requires that all operating electrical equipment shall be kept in safe and proper working condition, and electrical equipment maintained for emergency service shall be periodically inspected and tested as necessary to ensure its fitness for service.

Section 5.14 of the VEBL mandates that an annual permit shall be required for the following:

- a) the maintenance of existing operating electrical equipment;
- b) a service supply or power supply to a building or premises, where either or both supply ratings in combination exceed 500 kVA;
- c) any service supply or power supply to the electrical equipment that is greater than 750 volts; or
- d) any existing electrical equipment maintained for emergency service.

In accordance with Sections 5.1, 5.12 and 5.15 of the VEBL, upon application by any person the City Electrician may issue an annual permit valid for 12 calendar months from the date of issuance; such annual permit authorizes an owner to maintain all existing operating electrical equipment in safe and proper working order in conformance with Rule 2-300 of the CE Code.

Directions

Owners of residential, commercial, industrial and institutional facilities require an annual permit to operate and maintain regulated electrical equipment and systems under the Vancouver Electrical By-law. An annual permit requires collaboration between the owner, a designated Field Safety Representative (FSR), and Vancouver Electrical Inspections Branch.

(Original signed by)

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The noteworthy details:

[Review the Vancouver Electrical By-law](#)

[Review the Safety Standards Act and Regulations](#)

[Review the TSBC Directive: Electrical operating permit requirements](#)

[Review the TSBC Information Bulletin: Operating Permits](#)

Question: Why do I need an annual permit (operating permit)?

Answer: In accordance with the Act and Regulations, an operating permit is required in British Columbia if you are operating or maintaining electrical equipment and systems. Vancouver Electrical By-law refers to such operating permit as to an annual permit, it is your legal obligation to obtain an annual permit if you are operating or maintaining electrical equipment and systems that fall within the conditions of Section 5.14.

Having a qualified FSR responsible for the operation and maintenance of your property's regulated electrical equipment and systems protects your investment by providing compliance and oversight of your site's safety.

Collaboration between the owner, a designated FSR, and Electrical Inspections Branch under an annual permit confirms that maintenance of your equipment is monitored and performed by qualified individuals.

Each site, facility or building may be subject to periodic inspection, and enforcement actions are applicable if annual permits are not acquired.

Question: When is an annual permit required?

Answer: You must obtain an annual permit before operating equipment or performing maintenance work, and adhere to an ongoing renewal process as long as the equipment remains in service. Examples of when electrical equipment and systems require an electrical annual permit:

- 1) the supply rated-volt-amperes is greater than 500 kVA (i.e. the overcurrent device of service, sub-service, feeder or branch circuit rated or set at 600 A @ 3Ø 4-wire 347/600 V; 1600 A @ 3Ø 4-wire 120/208 V); or
- 2) the supply voltage to electrical equipment is greater than 750 V (i.e. indoor, outdoor station operating at 2400/4160 V, 7200/12470 V Grounded Wye); or
- 3) the electrical equipment maintained for emergency service; the electrical equipment requires regular maintenance:
 - a. fire alarm system,
 - b. emergency electrical power supply system, emergency generator,
 - c. radio antenna system as per the Vancouver Fire and Building By-laws,
 - d. fire signal receiving centre & system, signal to fire department as per the VBBL,
 - e. life safety and fire protection systems as per the VBBL Alternative Solution,
 - f. smoke control & smoke venting equipment,
 - g. special fire suppression system,
 - h. electric motor-driven fire pump,
 - i. heat-tracing cable system for sprinkler system,
 - j. door in fire separation equipped with hold open device,
 - k. uninterruptible power supply, batteries, storage battery,

- l. electric vehicle energy management system,
- m. renewable energy system, or
- n. electrical equipment used in filming, & etc.

Section 5.13 of the VEBL states that where an annual permit has been issued to a person pursuant to this By-law, that person shall not be required during the term of such permit to obtain a permit for minor electrical works which do not increase the total service supply or power supply kVA load rating specified in the application by more than 5 percent.

Question: Who is responsible for obtaining and renewing an annual permit?

Answer: The owner of the electrical equipment, the person having the custody, care, management or use of the electrical equipment, and owners' representatives such as the lessee of the building are responsible for obtaining and renewing annual permits. A person or party authorized by the owner to act as their agent (i.e. a property management company) can also be responsible for obtaining and renewing annual permits.

Question: Who can obtain an annual permit?

Answer: The aforementioned persons. A licensed electrical contractor who holds a licence under the Vancouver Licence By-law as a trade contractor authorized to carry out electrical work and a licence (TSBC) as a licensed contractor in respect of electrical equipment, under the Safety Standards Act.

The application for an annual permit must include the name and the class of certificate of qualification of the FSR who will perform or supervise the electrical works under the permit, the Act and Regulations.

Question: What are the responsibilities of an annual permit holder and the FSR named on an annual permit?

Answer: The followings are the responsibilities of an annual permit holder and the FSR named on the permit:

- a) keep the annual permit current, adhere to an ongoing renewal process as long as the equipment remains in service,
- b) ensure compliance with the terms and conditions of the annual permit,
- c) ensure that all electrical work is performed by certified individual and licensed contractor under Electrical Safety Regulation,
- d) request periodic inspections within the time period of the permit (Section 5.24 of VEBL),
- e) maintain an up to date log of electrical works undertaken under the permit (Section 5.24 of VEBL),
- f) immediately notify the City Electrician if the FSR named on the permit ceases to perform or supervise the works (Section 5.24 of VEBL),
- g) immediately cease all electrical work under the existing permit and apply for a new permit, if the FSR named on the permit ceases to perform or supervise the works (Section 5.24 of VEBL),
- h) the FSR is responsible for providing the owner with technical guidance related to electrical equipment and safety,
- i) the FSR must review the permit log regularly; the FSR validate completed electrical work and provide assurance that the electrical equipment has been safely installed and is being properly maintained,
- j) the FSR has the responsibility to regularly assess, operate, and maintain the electrical equipment with the owner.