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Electrical Contractors of Medicine Hat

Newsletter for May 2016

1) Temporary Services

On April 14, 2016, eleven temporary services were inspected. Out of the eleven inspections, only one passed the requirements of the Canadian Electrical Code (CEC). All of the Temporary Services inspected were installed without the required Final inspection being requested. Four of the Temporary Services were disconnected as the building was constructed and the permanent service connected already. The following list of concerns appears to be a constant issue and must be addressed.

- a) The installations of Temporary Services are not properly grounded to meet CEC requirements. The CEC #76-004 and #10-700 rules state that two ground rods or a grounding plate must be used. A previous electrical STANDATA has allowed for the use of a single ground rod for temporary services, BUT, the ground rod must be a 3.0m ground rod to be properly installed. We are still seeing 1.5m rods that only penetrate the ground <0.3m.
- b) CEC #76-016 also states that all 5-15R and 5-20R receptacles for Temporary Services must be G.F.C.I. protected. With the evolution of G.F.C.I. receptacles, we have been assured that nuisance tripping is no longer a concern. Effective immediately, when temporary services are removed from a project, they must have all receptacles replaced to meet CEC #76-016 before they can be put into service at another project.

All Temporary Service electrical permit applications submitted after September 1, 2016 will require a passed Final inspection BEFORE it will be connected by the CMH utility. Remember, it is the Contractors responsibility to arrange for the required inspection.

2) Inspections

It is the electrical contractor's responsibility to request the required inspections once the work is completed and provide access for inspectors to complete the inspection as requested.

- a) Service changes and/or panel changes – it is not up to the City of Medicine Hat Electrical Utility department to contact inspectors about upcoming service upgrades. It is the electrical contractor's responsibility to ensure the Final inspection is scheduled once the work is completed and access is provided for the required inspection. We often have to make multiple trips to the same address because work is not completed when an inspector arrives onsite.

Effective immediately, service and panel changes will no longer be inspected the same day the work is being completed. Please schedule the Final inspection once the work is completed and ensure if you cannot provide access, the homeowner will be available on the day of the inspection to allow access. Extra fees may be charged if two trips are required to complete the inspection.

- b) There have been numerous occasions where electrical installations were covered before an inspection had been completed. The CEC#2-028 specifically states that work cannot be covered until it has been inspected. This is most common in new construction when the insulation and vapour barriers are installed prior to the rough-in inspection.
- c) Often we are requested to inspect parts or portions of work permitted by an electrical permit and must return to inspect the remainder of the work at a later date. Our current Quality Management Plan allows for only one Rough-in and one Final inspection.

Effective immediately, electrical inspectors MAY issue a re-inspection fee, as per the City of Medicine Hat Electrical bylaw #3013 Schedule "A", if work is not ready, covered, incomplete or no access is provided to the work to be inspected.

3) Permits

It has become a problem that electrical work is continuing to be done without electrical permits in place. Please be aware, submitting a permit "application" is not permission to start work. Most applications that are submitted are reviewed and approved by an Electrical inspector prior to the permit being issued. If a copy of your permit has not been sent back to you with a permit number in the upper right hand corner of the form, then an approved permit is not in place. See CEC #2-004.

4) Other items

- a) The use of Arc Fault breakers are still a point of contention and confusion. CEC #26-724(f) & (g) are specific in addressing the exceptions for their use.
- b) We are still seeing dry type connectors used in wet locations. If cables are used in wet locations, they must be terminated using wet location connectors. See CEC #2-024.
- c) Ensure that smoke detectors/Fire Alarm systems are not powered from G.F.C.I. or Arc Fault circuits. See CEC #32-110.
- d) Also, the City of Medicine Hat Electrical Utility department no longer installs ground plates or ground rods. It is the electrical contractor's responsibility to complete the "whole" electrical installation, including grounding. We can not put the City of Medicine Hat in a position of risk or liability, should there ever be a situation where the system grounding on a Service installation fails.

Please contact Gary Christensen or Dan Beaton @ 403-529-8210, if you have any questions regarding the content of this newsletter.