

Electrical permits and inspections in Abbotsford

Who actually issues your permit, what you are allowed to do yourself, the deadline nobody mentions, and what happens when an inspection does not pass.

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Most of what goes wrong with electrical permits in Abbotsford is not technical. It is that people ask the wrong office, assume the wrong rules, or miss a deadline they were never told about. This guide is the plain version. Everything in it comes from Technical Safety BC, and every source is listed at the back so you can check it yourself.

1. Your electrical permit does not come from City Hall

In Abbotsford, the City does not issue electrical trade permits at all. Technical Safety BC issues the permit, and Technical Safety BC does the inspection that closes it. The City's own residential inspection checklist requires Technical Safety BC's final electrical approval before a job can be signed off, which is a good indication of who is actually in charge of the wiring.

This surprises people who have just been to City Hall for a building permit. Both permits can exist on the same project; they come from different authorities.

2. Seven BC municipalities are the exception — and Abbotsford is not one

Technical Safety BC publishes a short list of places where you must go to the municipality instead. It matters if you own property in more than one city, or if you are comparing advice you were given about a job somewhere else.

Technical Safety BC issues the permit	The municipality issues it instead
Abbotsford , Chilliwack, Mission, Langley, Coquitlam, and most of British Columbia	Burnaby · Maple Ridge · North Vancouver · Surrey · Victoria · Vancouver · West Vancouver

You will sometimes see it written that ten municipalities run their own electrical permitting. Ten is the number of municipalities delegated authority under the Safety Standards Act for electrical *and/or gas* permits. For electrical installation permits specifically, Technical Safety BC names the seven above.

3. Can you pull your own permit?

Sometimes. British Columbia allows a homeowner to do certain electrical work on their own home under Section 17 of the Electrical Safety Regulation, with a homeowner permit. Both routes need a permit — there is no version of this where the work is legitimate and unpermitted.

Three groups cannot get a homeowner permit at all, and this catches people out constantly:

- Owners of a **strata** property
- Owners of a **non-strata duplex**
- Anyone **operating a business from their home**

If you are in one of those three, the work has to be done by a licensed contractor. That is not a preference, it is the rule.

What a homeowner permit does let you do

- Replace light fixtures or ceiling fans
- Install or move light switches and electrical outlets
- Install solar equipment
- Connect permanently installed equipment, such as a dishwasher or a heat pump

What needs no permit at all

Replacing an existing switch, receptacle or thermostat does not require a permit when a licensed contractor does it. Like-for-like replacement of a fitting that is already there is not the same job as adding a circuit.

4. The 180-day rule

This is the part almost nobody is told, and it applies to homeowners and contractors alike.

An inspection must be requested within 180 days of the permit being issued.

On a homeowner permit you also submit a declaration after each phase of work is finished, or every 180 days, whichever comes first.

A permit is not a document you file away. It opens a window, and the window closes. If a renovation stalls — and they do stall — that clock is still running.

5. The value you declare is not a formality

The permit fee is set by Technical Safety BC, not by your electrician, and it is calculated from the declared value of the work. Because the fee follows the value, there is an obvious temptation to declare a low one.

Technical Safety BC's own wording: a permit for the final value and scope of work must be in place before a final inspection is requested, and undervalued work may be subject to enforcement action.

If the job grows, the permit has to grow with it. An unpermitted extra circuit is not a saving; it is the thing that stops the whole job passing.

The current fee schedule is published by Technical Safety BC and is the only version worth quoting.

6. What actually happens at the inspection

On a contracted job the sequence is fixed. The contractor's Field Safety Representative declares that the installation complies, and requests the inspection. An inspector then attends. Inspections happen after each phase is complete, and at least once inside that 180-day window.

On a panel upgrade there is an extra party involved, because the meter has to come off. The permit is secured and the work is scheduled with BC Hydro, you are told before the disconnect happens, the old panel and meter come out, the new panel and meter base go in, and the inspector is called to approve the reconnection.

7. If the inspection does not pass

An inspection that does not pass is not a disaster; it is a deficiency list and a return visit. The question worth asking any electrician before you hire them is who pays for that return visit.

Our answer, in writing: **if an inspection does not pass on our work, we put it right, call the inspector back, and we cover the cost.**

8. What this means if you are hiring

Three questions will tell you most of what you need to know about whoever is quoting your job.

- **Who is pulling the permit, and when?** On our jobs we pull the permit before the work starts and you fill in no forms.
- **Will you be there for the inspection?** We are — so you are not left in your own hallway explaining someone else's wiring to an inspector.

- **Are you a licensed electrical contractor in British Columbia?** Ask for that in writing before anyone starts. We are, and we are licensed and insured, WorkSafeBC registered, active and in good standing, with continuous coverage since 30 September 2019.

Sources

Every statement above traces to one of these, read at source on 6 September 2026.

Where a figure changes over time we have published the rule and the link rather than the number.

What it supports	Where it comes from
Technical Safety BC issues electrical installation permits for most of BC, and the seven exception municipalities	technicalsafetybc.ca/electrical-permits
Abbotsford requires Technical Safety BC final electrical approval	City of Abbotsford, Residential Building Inspection Documentation Checklist (abbotsford.ca)
Contractors and homeowners both require a permit; the FSR declares compliance and requests inspection; inspection within 180 days; undervalued work and enforcement	technicalsafetybc.ca/permits/electrical-installation
Who cannot hold a homeowner permit; what homeowner permits cover; no permit for like-for-like switch, receptacle or thermostat replacement by a licensed contractor; the declaration rule	technicalsafetybc.ca/apply-for/permits/homeowner-permits/homeowner-electrical-permits
Homeowner work is permitted under Section 17 of the Electrical Safety Regulation	Electrical Safety Regulation, s.17, cited by Technical Safety BC
Current permit fees	Technical Safety BC Electrical Fee Schedule — check the live schedule

Check the live figures. Permit fees and the rules around them both change, and Technical Safety BC publishes the current schedule on its own pages. If you are reading this well after September 2026, treat those pages as the current version.

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This guide is general information about British Columbia's permitting rules, not advice on a specific installation. Published 6 September 2026.