

Electrical permits and inspections in Greater Victoria

Who issues your permit in each municipality, what the City of Victoria says needs one, how an inspection is requested, the EV charging and heat pump rules worth knowing, and who to call about anything before your meter.

The Wire Guys Electrical Ltd. · Serving British Columbia since 2019 · Every source listed on the last page · Checked 13 September 2026

Greater Victoria is not one permit area. The City of Victoria issues its own electrical permits and the municipalities around it do not, so the answer to “who do I apply to?” depends on which side of a municipal boundary the property sits. This guide is the plain version for homeowners, landlords and strata councils in the City of Victoria, Saanich, Oak Bay, Esquimalt and Langford. It is taken from the municipalities’ own pages, Technical Safety BC, BC Hydro, Statistics Canada and the Capital Regional District, and every source is listed at the back so you can check it yourself.

1. The City of Victoria issues its own permits, and its neighbours do not

Technical Safety BC issues electrical permits for most of British Columbia, and it publishes a list of the exceptions. Only ten municipalities in the province are delegated under the Safety Standards Act to issue their own electrical or gas permits. The City of Victoria is one of them, listed for electrical work only, and it is the only Greater Victoria municipality on that list.

Municipality	Who issues the electrical permit	Where it says so
City of Victoria	The City, through Building and Inspection Services	The City's electrical permits page, and Technical Safety BC's jurisdiction list
Saanich	Technical Safety BC	Saanich's permit questions page: "Electrical or gas permit – regulated by Technical Safety BC"
Oak Bay	Technical Safety BC	Oak Bay's building permit checklist
Esquimalt	Technical Safety BC	Esquimalt's building and zoning page
Langford	Technical Safety BC	Langford's building permits page

A Victoria mailing address is not always in the City of Victoria

The city printed on an envelope and the municipality that issues the permit are two different things. Our own Greater Victoria address, 300-1095 McKenzie Avenue, reads "Victoria" but sits in the District of Saanich, so an electrical permit there comes from Technical Safety BC rather than the City. Before anyone applies, confirm which municipality the property is actually in.

Licensing and permitting are two different things

Technical Safety BC's jurisdiction page makes the point itself: even in the ten municipalities that issue their own permits, Technical Safety BC still oversees contractor licensing and the certification of qualified individuals. A contractor working inside the City of Victoria is therefore licensed provincially and permitted by the City at the same time, and neither replaces the other.

A licence says who is allowed to do the work. A permit says this particular job has been declared and will be inspected.

You need both, from two different bodies, and holding one does not get you the other.

2. What needs a permit inside the City of Victoria

The City lists work that needs an electrical permit before it starts. Its list includes:

- Wiring new receptacles or switches
- Replacing existing lighting fixtures and baseboard heaters
- Removing part of an electrical system
- A temporary entertainment or construction service
- Any work that requires BC Hydro to connect or reconnect a service
- Any electrical work on life safety systems

Read the second item carefully, because it catches people out. Replacing an existing light fixture or baseboard heater is on the City's list, so a straight swap is not automatically

permit-free inside City limits. The fifth item matters for panel work, because a panel upgrade takes the meter off and BC Hydro has to reconnect the service afterwards.

Who may apply

To apply for an electrical permit in the City of Victoria you must be a registered electrical contractor or a homeowner. A homeowner applying on their own house has to meet the requirements of the current Safety Standards Act and the Electrical Safety Regulation. The City takes applications online, and homeowners apply by email to electricalpermits@victoria.ca.

The City also states which code is in force. Since 4 March 2025 that has included the Canadian Electrical Code, Part I, 26th Edition. Code editions change, so treat the City's page as the current word.

One thing we see go wrong on DIY work. The commonest is an EV charger installed without a Red Seal electrician, run on thin wire instead of the proper heavy gauge. It works, until the wiring burns. A charger needs a circuit sized for it, which is why the load calculation in section 5 comes first.

3. Requesting an inspection in the City of Victoria

Inside City limits, permits and inspections are handled by the City's Building and Inspection Services, and inspection requests are submitted online through MyCity.

City of Victoria	Details, as the City publishes them
Building and Inspection Services	250.361.0344
Inspection requests	Online through MyCity
Homeowner permit applications	By email to electricalpermits@victoria.ca
City Hall	1 Centennial Square, Victoria, BC V8W 1P6 · open 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday to Friday

The City publishes its permit fees in a separate Fee Schedule document rather than on the electrical permits page. Fee amounts change, so we have not printed any here; read the current schedule before you budget.

What happens on our jobs

- **We pull the permit before the work starts**, with whichever authority covers the address, and you fill in no forms.
- **We are there for the inspection**, so you are not left in your own hallway explaining someone else's wiring to an inspector.

- **If an inspection does not pass on our work, we put it right, call the inspector back, and we cover the cost.**

Outside the City: Saanich, Oak Bay, Esquimalt and Langford

In the four neighbouring municipalities the electrical permit comes from Technical Safety BC. Esquimalt's own building page gives 1-866-566-SAFE (7233) for questions about electrical and gas permits. The building permit, where a project needs one, is still the municipality's, so a renovation in any of the four can involve two authorities: the municipality for the building permit and Technical Safety BC for the electrical one.

4. EV charging rules that differ across the region

Three municipalities in the region have written EV charging into their rules, and each has done it differently. Bylaws change when they are amended, so read this as a summary of what the rules said when we checked on 13 September 2026, and read the current version before you design around it.

City of Victoria: new buildings are EV ready

Since July 2020 the City has required new residential and commercial buildings to have outlets capable of charging an EV. Every parking space required for a new home, apartment or condo must have a powered outlet, and every EV charging outlet has to offer at least Level 2 charging.

Langford: an engineer's memo before the building permit

Langford's zoning bylaw asks for more paperwork up front. For a building covered by the bylaw's EV charging clause, the building permit application must include a memo from an electrical engineer verifying that the building's load capacity can supply Level 2 charging to all parking spaces. It must also include a site plan showing the energized spaces, conduits and electrical connections, and both have to be approved before the building permit is issued. If you are planning a building in Langford that the clause covers, the memo is part of the application, not something added afterwards.

Saanich: a garden suite's parking space must be wired

Saanich attaches its rule to garden suites. The District currently requires one energized outlet capable of Level 2 charging for the garden suite's parking space. You do not have to install a charger, but the parking space has to be wired so that one could be installed later, which means the electrical servicing belongs in the plan for the suite from the start.

5. Older houses, oil heat and heat pumps

The age of the housing changes sharply across the region. Statistics Canada's 2021 Census dates 59.0% of occupied homes in Oak Bay to 1960 or before. Langford is the reverse: 57.2% of its occupied homes were built in 2006 or later.

Oil heat is still a large part of the regional picture

The Capital Regional District's 2018 greenhouse gas inventory put home heating oil ahead of natural gas as a source of emissions from residential buildings. For the City of Victoria and Saanich, the same report estimated heating oil emissions from the number of known oil tanks.

A heat pump is a large new load

Replacing an oil furnace with a heat pump adds a large new electrical load, so the first job is a load calculation. On our jobs the load is calculated before anything new goes on the panel, whether that is a heat pump, an EV charger or a hot tub.

The Province of B.C.'s CleanBC program has offered a rebate for electrical service upgrades needed to install a heat pump, and the Capital Regional District's Home Energy Navigator offers free help with rebate navigation. Rebate amounts are re-scoped regularly, so we have not printed any; check Better Homes BC and the Home Energy Navigator for the current terms.

6. Before your meter: BC Hydro

BC Hydro is the utility across Greater Victoria. By its own figures, the Greater Victoria area has four transmission circuits serving about 160,000 BC Hydro customers. Anything on the utility's side of the meter is a call to BC Hydro rather than to an electrician.

Why the permit comes before the power goes back on

Before BC Hydro energizes a connection through its Express Connections process, it requires the customer's application, a declaration from the electrical contractor that the service meets its requirements, a valid electrical permit number, and the customer's approval of fees and charges.

When a panel upgrade is needed, the sequence on our jobs is fixed. 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.

Storms hit the Island hardest

BC Hydro's own reports show how long outages on the Island can run. In the December 2018 windstorm, nearly 350,000 customers lost power, about 80 per cent of all customers on Vancouver Island and the Gulf Islands, and the last of them were restored on 31 December. The morning after the November 2024 windstorm, about 90,000 of the 95,000 BC Hydro customers still without power province-wide were on Vancouver Island and the Gulf Islands. BC Hydro named debris on roads, sustained winds, limited helicopter patrols and restricted ferry service among the reasons.

BC Hydro: 1 800 224 9376. An outage can be reported at any hour.

A power line down on the ground is a 911 call. BC Hydro's safety advice is to stay ten metres back and treat the line as live.

7. Four questions for whoever is quoting your job

- **Which municipality is the property in, and who issues the permit?** At a City of Victoria address it is the City. In Saanich, Oak Bay, Esquimalt or Langford it is Technical Safety BC. On our jobs we pull the permit before the work starts.
- **Has anyone calculated the load?** Before a heat pump or an EV charger goes on the panel, the answer should be yes. On our jobs it is done first.
- **Will you be there for the inspection?** We are, on every one.
- **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.

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We are a licensed electrical contractor in British Columbia. We pull the permit before the work starts and we attend the inspection. Our rate is \$135 an hour for a Red Seal electrician plus a helper, the same rate at 3am as at 3pm. The quote for work we can see is free, and it changes if the scope changes. Tracing a hidden fault is \$165 for a 45-minute diagnostic.

Jasjot Kohli, the owner, is Red Seal certified and our designated Field Safety Representative. WorkSafeBC registered, active and in good standing, with continuous coverage since 30 September 2019 · BBB Accredited · Canadian family owned, serving British Columbia since 2019.

Sources

Every statement above traces to one of these, checked 13 September 2026. Where a figure changes over time we have published the rule and the source rather than the number.

What it supports	Where it comes from
Ten municipalities delegated to issue electrical or gas permits; the City of Victoria listed for electrical only; Technical Safety BC still oversees contractor licensing in those areas	Technical Safety BC, Jurisdiction (policy page)
What needs a permit; who may apply; homeowner requirements and the email address; MyCity inspection requests; Building and Inspection Services; City Hall address and hours; the code in force; the Fee Schedule	City of Victoria, Electrical Permits — victoria.ca/building-business/permits-development-construction/building-renovating/electrical-permits
Saanich electrical permits through Technical Safety BC	District of Saanich, Permit Q&As — saanich.ca
Oak Bay electrical permits through Technical Safety BC	District of Oak Bay, Building Permit Checklist — oakbay.ca
Esquimalt electrical permits through Technical Safety BC, and the enquiry number	Township of Esquimalt, Building and Zoning — esquimalt.ca/business-development/building-zoning
Langford electrical permits through Technical Safety BC	City of Langford, Building Permits — langford.ca

1095 McKenzie Avenue is in the District of Saanich	District of Saanich open-data parcel and municipal boundary layers
City of Victoria EV readiness in new construction	City of Victoria, Electric Vehicle Readiness in New Construction — victoria.ca
Langford's engineer's memo and site plan	City of Langford Zoning Bylaw No. 300, Part 4, section 4.01.10 — langford.ca
Saanich garden suite parking space wiring	District of Saanich, Garden Suites — saanich.ca
Oak Bay and Langford housing age	Statistics Canada, 2021 Census of Population, Census Profile — statcan.gc.ca
Heating oil ahead of natural gas in residential emissions; known oil tanks in Victoria and Saanich	Capital Regional District, 2018 Community Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory Report (August 2020) — crd.bc.ca
Rebate for electrical service upgrades for a heat pump; Home Energy Navigator	Province of B.C. news release 2024EMLI0038-001043; betterhomesbc.ca/rebates ; CRD Home Energy Navigator — crd.ca
Four transmission circuits and about 160,000 customers; Express Connections requirements	BC Hydro, Victoria–Esquimalt cable project and Express Connections process — bchydro.com
The 2018 and November 2024 windstorm figures and reasons	BC Hydro news releases, 2019 storm report and November 2024 Island windstorm — bchydro.com
BC Hydro number and outage reporting; downed line advice	BC Hydro, Contact us and published safety advice — bchydro.com

Check the live figures. Fees, bylaw requirements, rebate amounts and code editions all change. The municipalities, BC Hydro and the rebate programmes publish the current versions on their own pages. If you are reading this well after September 2026, treat those pages as the current version.

This guide is general information about permitting and inspection in Greater Victoria, not advice on a specific installation. Published 13 September 2026.