



## Electrical Master Permit Program

**Category:** Commercial Construction

**Revised:** December 1, 2011 [Paul L. Scarlett], Director

**Responsible Bureau Section:** Commercial Inspections  
1900 SW Fourth Avenue, Suite 5000  
Portland, OR 97201  
503-823-7304

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Additional information may be viewed on our Web site at: [www.portlandoregon.gov/bds](http://www.portlandoregon.gov/bds)

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### PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The Electrical Master Permit Program was established by the State of Oregon in 1959 to promote electrical safety and to implement a more efficient procedure for handling repair, alteration, or replacement of existing electrical products in qualified facilities. The Bureau of Development Services Inspections Section operates this program under authority of and in conformity with Oregon Revised Statutes, Oregon Administrative Rules, and Title 26 of the City Code. Activities under the program are governed by ORS 479.560(3) and OAR 918-309-0100. This Program Guide was established February 1, 1997 and is revised December 1, 2011 to conform to changes in OARS.

## **SCOPE**

When a facility is registered in the Electrical Master Permit Program (here after referred to as the program), no separate permit is required for installation allowed under the program. Electrical installations within qualified facilities may be done by employees holding the appropriate electrical licenses, or by State of Oregon licensed electrical contractors. Any electrical installation not covered by the program requires an electrical permit. The electrical permit application and payment must be submitted to the Bureau's Development Services Center located at 1900 SW Fourth Avenue on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor prior to performing electrical installation. If in doubt that proposed installation is covered under the program, call the Inspections Section at (503) 823-7304. Whether or not the installation is covered by the program, electrical installations must be performed by appropriately licensed electrical personnel. Installations may not be performed beyond the scope of the license.

### **A. QUALIFYING FACILITIES**

The program is available for all commercial, industrial, and government buildings under common ownership or management.

Qualifying facilities include:

1. Where only a single building or structure is involved, the grounds and adjacent facilities under common control or management that makes up the complex containing the building or structure.
2. Isolated buildings and structures in multiple sites within the City of Portland's jurisdiction that individually meet the definition of covered facility but only when acceptable to the Inspections Section and the owner or operating manager; and,
3. Incidental buildings and structures adjacent or connected to a qualifying facility.

### **B. LICENSE REQUIREMENTS AND WORK ALLOWED**

There are four different license configurations for the Master Permit that can be utilized. An applicant may use any one or all four options as long as a separate log is kept for each one of the four. As appropriate for the type of work to be performed, applicants must:

1. Employ one or more person(s) possessing a General Supervisor (GS) or Plant Supervisor (PS) license or have an Electrical Engineer (EE) on staff. (A Professional Engineer (PE) is not allowed.) Any one of these allows all other electrical licenses to perform electrical installations under their specific license except for service installations.
2. Maintain a contract for electrical installations with a State of Oregon licensed electrical contractor employing a General Supervisor license and using appropriately licensed electrical personnel. A copy of the contract shall be provided to the Bureau of

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Development Services. An electrical contractor is allowed to make all installations except for service. Service Installations require a regular electrical permit.

3. Employ a Limited Maintenance Electrician (LME) who is authorized to maintain, repair and replace electrical installations that are 600 volts or less. A LME is not authorized to make any new electrical installations.

**Note:** A General Journeyman or Plant Journeyman (PJ) without a General Supervisor (GS), Plant Supervisor (PS), or Electrical Engineer (EE) on staff is limited to the same electrical installations of a LME.

4. Employ a Limited Building Maintenance Electrician (BME) who is authorized to maintain, repair and replace the following items that are 300 volts or less: light switches, light fixtures, fans, receptacles and ballasts.

**C. INSTALLATIONS NOT ALLOWED UNDER THE PROGRAM**

1. Electrical installations in a new building shell, structural retrofit, installation or alteration of load-bearing walls, foundations or exit passageways;
2. Any electrical service installations including repair;
3. Electrical installations made in connection with a change of use of occupancy classification of a building or structure;
4. Any construction that increases the square footage of a building or structure;
5. Remodeling within an occupied building which results in:
  - a. Vacation of more than 25% of occupants within a floor or building;
  - b. Termination of a tenant's usual activities for more than ten working days;
  - c. Construction that involves more than 25% of the contiguous area of any floor;
6. Electrical installations within a covered facility, which are part of construction also involving a plumbing, structural and/or mechanical permit *other than* a master permit under Chapter 368 2003 Oregon Laws.

**D. PLAN REVIEW**

Electrical plans must be submitted to the Bureau for review when the installation involves one or more of the following:

1. Fire pump;
2. Emergency systems;
3. Addition of new motor load of 100 HP or more;
4. Patient area in a health care facility;
5. Hazardous locations;
6. Supply over 600 volts nominal;
7. Feeder 600 amps or over;
8. Renewable Energy electrical systems rated over 25 KVA;
9. Commercial use agriculture buildings;

10. Installation of 150 KVA or larger separately derived system;
11. Feeder 400 amps or more where the available fault current exceeds 10,000 amps at 150 volt or less to ground. Or exceeds 14,000 amps for all other installations.

**Note:** All other plan review requirements will require a separate permit and would not be part of the Electrical Master Permit Program. The electrical permit application is online here: <https://www.portland.gov/bds/documents/electrical-permit-application>.

## **E. OWNERS DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

1. Owners or operating managers of registered facilities must assign a responsible person to maintain a record of all electrical installation done under the program. Electrical installations will be listed on log forms with the following information:
  - a. name of person doing the installation;
  - b. electrical license number;
  - c. date of installation,
  - d. installation description, and
  - e. location of the installation.

The log (or copy) shall be located on the facility premises. In any month in which electrical installation is performed, a copy of the log shall be sent via U.S. Mail, email or fax to the Inspections Section within the first five business days of the following month.

2. The facility in a contractual agreement with an electrical contractor may assign to the electrical contractor responsibility for submitting the log provided all of the following conditions are met:
  - a. The facility personnel do not perform contracted electrical installation;
  - b. Log forms are acceptable to the Bureau;
  - c. The electrical contractor lists all electrical installations in the log;
  - d. The log is available on the facility's premises for inspector review; and
  - e. The electrical contractor submits the log to the Bureau as per the schedule described in Section E. 1 above.

## **F. APPLYING FOR REGISTRATION**

1. The applicant for registration must be the responsible party, building operations manager, or electrical contractor(s) responsible for all electrical installations in the covered facility. Each registration is limited to a single facility, which may be more than one building in a complex of buildings. Applicants with multiple facility locations on non-contiguous lots must obtain registration for each facility. With the approval of the Inspections Manager, an owner or operating manager may register buildings or structures on non-contiguous sites as a single covered facility.

2. Registration applications may be obtained from the Inspections Section or online at [https://www.portland.gov/sites/default/files/2022/blank-empp-update-form\\_2021-1.pdf](https://www.portland.gov/sites/default/files/2022/blank-empp-update-form_2021-1.pdf). All applicable portions of the application should be completed. Registration fees shall be paid at the time of application. Current fee schedules are available online at <https://www.portland.gov/bds/development-permit-processes>
3. The applicant will include the following information with the registration application:
  - a. Facility name and complete address;
  - b. Person(s) responsible for payment of Master Permit account. Complete name and address;
  - c. Responsible Party's name, address, email, phone and/or cell number(s) and fax number if applicable;
  - d. Electrical inspection contact (Person who the inspector will contact for inspection) Name, email, phone and/or cell number(s) and fax number, if applicable;
  - e. Electrical Signing Supervisor or Electrical Engineer: Name, License Number, email, phone and/or cell number(s) and fax number, if applicable;
  - f. Safety gear or special equipment that the inspector needs while inspecting the site;
  - g. Names of all electrical contractors whose electrical installation is included under the master permit and a copy of the contract or letter of agreement; and
  - h. Site plan of location with building name(s) and/or number(s).

**Note:** An updated registration shall be completed annually by January 1<sup>st</sup>. Also, during the year, any changes made to the information on the registration form shall be sent to the Commercial Inspections Section immediately by completing an update form ([https://www.portland.gov/sites/default/files/2022/blank-empp-update-form\\_2021-1.pdf](https://www.portland.gov/sites/default/files/2022/blank-empp-update-form_2021-1.pdf)). Updates may be sent via email ([bds@portlandoregon.gov](mailto:bds@portlandoregon.gov)), fax or U.S. mail.

U.S. mail the completed application, attachments and registration fee to:

BDS Inspections Section  
Attention: Electrical Master Permit Program  
1900 SW Fourth Avenue, Suite 5000  
Portland, OR 97201

Phone: 503-823-7304, Fax: 503-823-5434

## **G. INSPECTION OF ELECTRICAL INSTALLATIONS**

Inspections will be made at least once a year, although the inspector may require more than one inspection per facility. The electrical inspector will contact the owner or specified contact person to establish a mutually acceptable date for an inspection. Inspections generally take several hours. The person involved in the electrical installation will accompany the inspector for the full inspection unless otherwise requested by the

inspector.

If the inspector finds an electrical installation or condition which does not comply with the Oregon Electrical Specialty Code, the inspector will notify the facility contact person of the electrical violations. Correction of electrical life safety hazards shall be completed within 20 calendar days of the violation notification. All work deficiencies shall be corrected and made to comply with the requirements of this program and the City Code.

Electrical installation that is intended to be covered shall be inspected and approved. The master permit holder must request inspections prior to cover. Any major equipment connections that will not be able to be inspected after energized will need to be inspected prior to being energized.

Inspectors are available for consultation at the Bureau's hourly rate.

If the master permit holder chooses to discontinue the master permit program, final inspections shall be requested immediately. All future and uncompleted installations must be by separate permit and inspection.

Nothing in this policy prevents the City of Portland from performing random, unannounced inspections within the City's jurisdiction of any facility registered under the program.

## **H. CODE INTERPRETATIONS**

In cases of disagreement over electrical interpretations, the master permit holder may pursue these four levels of appeal:

1. Contact the Inspections Manager and explain the problem. The manager may consult with others before ruling.
2. If the appellant is not satisfied with the Inspections Manager's ruling, a formal appeal may be filed. Find more information online at <https://www.portland.gov/bds/file-appeal>. The appeal fee is shown on the form. The fee must be paid when the form is submitted to the Bureau. The appellant will be notified of a hearing date and location. Written notification of the Administrative Appeal Board's decision will be sent to the appellant.
3. Further appeals may be made to the City of Portland Electrical Code Board of Appeal. The appeal form completed for the second level appeal will be used for the third level appeal. No additional fee is necessary.
4. Any subsequent appeals may be made to Chief Electrical Inspector of the State of Oregon Building Codes Division, and must be filed within 30 days of the Bureau's Electrical Code Board of Appeal decision.

## **I. BILLING**

Current registered facilities will be billed monthly for the cost of inspections made during the prior month. Inspection fees are charged at the Bureau's hourly rate. The facility must submit payment to the Bureau within 30 days of the billing date. Payments not made by the deadline will result in a 10% penalty fee for each 30-day period until paid in full.

All service activities provided in connection to the covered facility will be charged at the hourly rate and billed monthly. Services charged include project review, inspections, consultations, correspondence, travel to and from the facility, in-office work to complete records and reports on the facility, process management, and administration charges. The minimum inspection fee for each facility/site will be a one-hour charge.

## **J. SUSPENSION AND TERMINATION**

Any registrant under the Electrical Master Permit Program which refuses or neglects to comply with the rules and the requirements outlined by this program guide may be suspended from participation in the program. In addition, the penalties provide under Portland City Code may be imposed. All work deficiencies shall be corrected and a final inspection made to comply with the requirements of this program and the City Code.

## **K. APPEAL OF SUSPENSION OR TERMINATION**

The owner, manager, or responsible party may appeal the suspension or termination to the Director of the Bureau. The appeal must be made in writing and received by the Bureau of Development Services within 15 calendar days of the suspension or termination.