News, Views and Updates from the Electrical Safety Authority

PLUGGED IN

SUMMER 2026

Plug-In Solar Systems:

Why They Are Not Acceptable in Ontario

p.9 ▶

Electrical Safety Enforcement | p.5

ESA ruling clarifies scope of undue hardship exception for expired Master Electrician licences

Worth Knowing | p.25

ESA has issued a Director's Order on Code Rule 2-010

Spotlight on Common Defects | p.32

Rule 2-004 (5): Learn how late or incomplete inspection requests can lead to rework and missed opportunities

Electrical Safety Authority

Table of Contents

Ontario Court Affirms Protections Around ESA's Master Electrician Exam Materials

The court order reinforces the integrity of the Master Electrician licensing process and confirms ESA's confidential exam materials are protected intellectual property

The Ontario Superior Court of Justice ruled in February 2026 that confidential materials related to ESA's Master Electrician (ME) Exam were unlawfully used, sold and distributed by a third party offering unauthorized exam preparation materials.

The Court confirmed the materials are ESA intellectual property and issued permanent orders prohibiting their sale, sharing or distribution.

The court order resulted from an investigation launched by ESA in 2024 into irregularities involving the virtual ME Exam format. ESA paused virtual examinations to help protect the licensing process and has since transitioned to an in-person-only exam format across Ontario.

The Court's decision reinforces ESA's ongoing efforts to safeguard the credibility of Ontario's ME licensing framework by ensuring the integrity of the entry-to-practice exam.

Why this matters

Each year, more than 1,000 individuals take ESA's ME Exam as part of the licensing process.

The exam is a regulatory requirement that assesses applicants' knowledge of technical requirements (the Ontario Electrical Safety Code), worker safety and business administration. Successfully passing the exam demonstrates that applicants possess the competence required under the *Electricity Act, 1998* and are equipped to uphold Ontario's high standards for electrical safety and consumer protection.

Protecting the exam process helps:

- **Maintain confidence in the ME designation**
- **Ensure fair and consistent assessment of all applicants**
- **Uphold consistent licensing standards**
- **Protect public safety**

> **"The vast majority of ME applicants work hard to earn their designation honestly and through demonstrated competency," said Sarah Kempel, Director of Licensing at ESA.**
>
> **"Maintaining rigorous examination standards helps reinforce public trust in Ontario's licensed electrical sector."**

Ontario Court Affirms Protections Around ESA's Master Electrician Exam Materials

CONTINUED

ESA continues to strengthen exam integrity

ESA recognizes that exam misconduct is an inherent risk across high-stakes testing environments, particularly for entry-to-practice exams, and actively manages that risk through strengthened security measures aligned with industry best practices.

Ongoing security improvements include:

- **Enhanced ME Exam Rules of Conduct and question bank**
- **Proactive and responsive security and monitoring measures to support fair and consistent testing practices**
- **Continuous review of exam administration processes in collaboration with subject matter experts and industry partners**

ESA remains committed to maintaining a licensing process that is fair, secure and focused on competency and public safety.

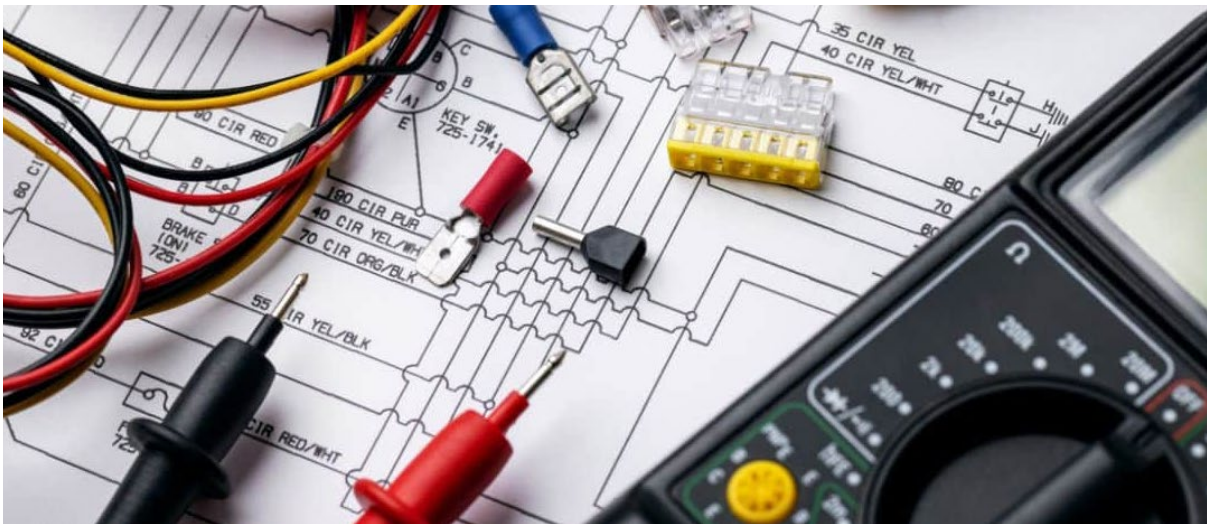
At the same time, ESA continues working to ensure exam availability and accessibility for applicants across Ontario through:

- **Increased exam capacity, including additional seats and new exam locations**
- **Continued support for accommodation requests and applicants in remote communities**

PREPARING FOR THE ME EXAM?

Visit ESA's website for official information on:

- **ME licence requirements**
- **Eligibility criteria**
- **Exam preparation resources**
- **Rules of Conduct and applicant expectations**



Licence Renewal Requires More than Payment Alone

Director of Review and Appeals decision clarifies the limited scope of the "undue hardship" exception for expired ME licences

A recent Director of Review and Appeals (DORA) decision upheld ESA's refusal to renew a Master Electrician (ME) licence more than one year after it had expired.

At the centre of the case was the "undue hardship" exception under **Ontario Regulation 570/05** — the only mechanism that may allow renewal after the one-year deadline has passed.

What happened?

At the time of this case, ME renewals were completed through ESA's former ME portal.

The licence holder:

- Paid annual renewal fees through the portal
- Did not complete the required five-year renewal application
- Allowed the licence to remain expired for more than one year

The appellant argued that they did not receive renewal notices and believed fee payment alone maintained the licence.

However, the DORA found that ESA had:

- Sent the required renewal correspondence
- Provided clear renewal information through the online portal
- Clearly indicated that both payment and submissions of the renewal form were required

The DORA concluded that the responsibility to complete all renewal requirements ultimately rested with the licence holder and that the circumstances did not meet the threshold for "undue hardship".

> **Note**: Since the events in this case took place, ESA has launched its self-serve licensing platform and decommissioned the former ME portal. All licensing functions have transitioned to the new platform.

Licence Renewal Requires More than Payment Alone CONTINUED

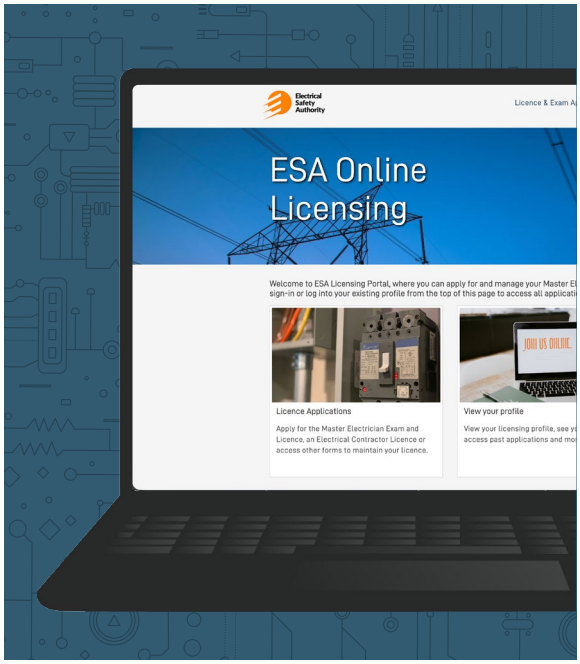
KEY TAKEAWAYS FOR LICENCE HOLDERS

Under Ontario Regulation 570/05:

- An ME licence may only be renewed within 12 months of its expiry date
- To re-activate an ME licence more than 12 months after expiry, applicants must typically reapply as a new applicant, including rewriting the ME qualifying exam
- After the one-year renewal window, applicants may be required to requalify unless they can demonstrate undue hardship
- To qualify for undue hardship, applicants must meet all five prescribed criteria **(see ESA's website for guidance)**
- Miscommunication or lack of notice will not typically meet the undue hardship threshold where the applicant remained responsible for understanding and complying with renewal requirements

To avoid disruptions to your licence:

- Know your renewal timeline — be aware of your annual ME licence expiry date
- Review renewal instructions carefully
- Complete all required renewal steps
- Maintain ongoing awareness of your licence status
- Renew before expiry deadlines



> **Note**: If you hold both an ME and an Electrical Contractor (EC) licence, they follow separate and distinct annual renewal cycles.

Renew online with ESA's self-serve licensing platform

ESA's self-serve licensing platform allows MEs and LECs to:

- Complete renewal requirements digitally
- Pay fees securely
- View and download receipts online
- Access licensing documents in one place

Need help renewing your ME or EC licence?

Visit ESAsafe.com/LicensingPlatform for step-by-step renewal FAQs and guidance

FY2026 Administrative Penalty Order Trends: Underground Economy Activity Remains Key Focus

Most APOs were tied to unlicensed work, failing to file a notification and illegal advertising

Administrative Penalty Orders (APOs) continue to play an important role in ESA's efforts to address underground economy activity and support a level playing field for Licensed Electrical Contractors (LECs) across Ontario. APOs are financial penalties that can be issued to address non-compliance with licensing and electrical safety requirements. Each APO can carry a financial penalty of up to $10,000.

In FY2026 (April 1, 2025 – March 31, 2026), ESA issued **110 APOs**, helping drive compliance and sending a clear message that unlicensed and non-compliant electrical work will not be tolerated.

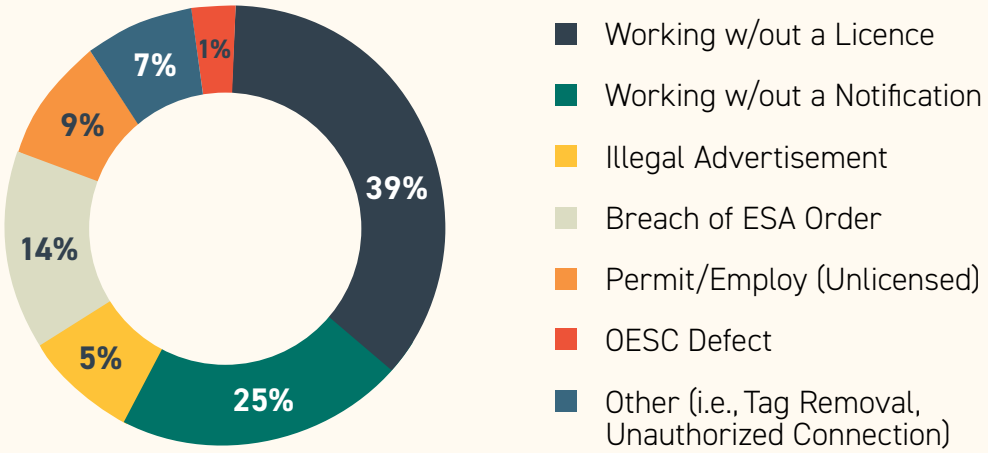
Together, these behaviours bypass regulatory requirements and increase safety risk for homeowners, businesses and workers.

ESA continued to see the highest levels of APO activity in densely populated areas with significant construction and renovation activity, including:

- **Etobicoke**
- **Brampton**
- **North York**
- **Ottawa**
- **Windsor**
- **Port Perry**

By focusing compliance efforts where risk is highest, ESA is working to reduce unsafe and unlicensed electrical work while supporting LECs who follow Ontario's electrical safety requirements.

ADMINISTRATIVE PENALTIES BY VIOLATION TYPE: FY2026



FY2026 Administrative Penalty Order Trends: Underground Economy Activity Remains Key Focus CONTINUED

FY2026 APO Trends

110
APOs issued

$363,502
total APO dollar value

Primary focus:
underground economy activity

- APOs carry financial penalties of up to $10,000 and may also have reputational consequences for individuals and businesses
- APOs help reduce the competitive advantage of unlicensed work and supports a level playing field for LECs
- APOs encourage compliance with Ontario's licensing and electrical safety requirements
- In some cases, enforcement action prompts individuals who were operating without a licence to pursue licensing and come into compliance

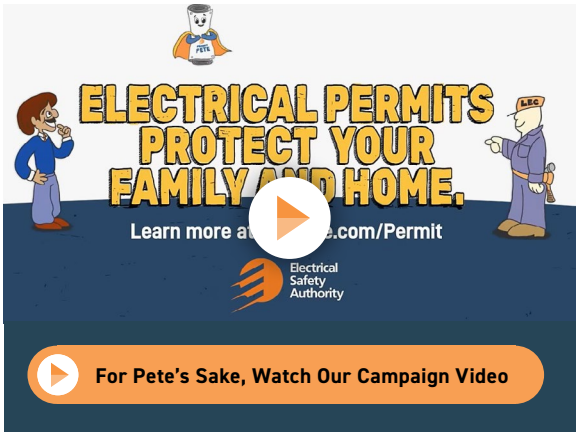
From Enforcement to Awareness: Permit Pete

Funds collected through the APO program also support electrical safety initiatives aimed at helping consumers better understand permit requirements and the importance of hiring LECs.

In FY2026, ESA launched its first campaign supported through APO reinvestment: Permit Pete.

The campaign uses simple, consumer-focused messaging to encourage homeowners to file notifications for electrical work and understand how permits help protect families, homes and businesses.

Learn more about the campaign by visiting: ESAsafe.com/Permit



Plug-In Solar Systems: Why They Are Not Acceptable in Canada

Plug-in photovoltaic systems are unapproved, unregulated and incompatible with the Electrical Code

ESA has issued a flash notice making it clear: there are currently no approved plug-in photovoltaic (PIPV) products for use in Canada. Until certified equipment and appropriate standards are in place, these systems cannot be installed in a code-compliant manner.

Plug-in photovoltaic (PIPV) systems — often marketed as simple, plug-and-play solar panels — are gaining attention as some jurisdictions in the United States move toward permitting their use. However, despite their growing popularity elsewhere, these products raise significant safety and regulatory concerns in Canada that Licensed Electrical Contractors (LECs) must understand.

At present, there are no applicable Canadian certification standards governing PIPV systems, and no approved products available on the Canadian market. As a result, they cannot be installed in a way that meets the requirements of the Canadian Electrical Code (CE Code), creating both compliance issues and potential safety risks.

The fundamental issue with PIPV lies in how it interfaces with existing electrical infrastructure. These systems are designed to feed energy back into a building through a standard receptacle, which is something that branch circuits and receptacles were never designed to accommodate. Electrical systems are built with the assumption that power flows in one direction: from the source to the load. PIPV reverses that assumption.

This creates a scenario where standard wiring methods and devices are exposed to operating conditions outside their intended design, increasing the likelihood of failure.

Key Safety Risks

Contractors should be aware of several serious hazards associated with PIPV installations:

Overheating and Fire Hazards

Back feeding through standard receptacles can lead to overloaded conductors or terminations. This may result in overheating of wiring or connections, potentially causing fires within concealed spaces.

High-Resistance Connections

Cord-and-plug connections are particularly susceptible to wear and looseness over time. When used in a generation scenario, these conditions can lead to arcing or localized heating at the plug interface.

Shock and Electrocution Risks

Some PIPV configurations involve energized male-ended plugs. This creates a hazard, as exposed conductive parts may become live and accessible, increasing the risk of serious injury.

Plug-In Solar Systems: Why They Are Not Acceptable in Canada CONTINUED

Back Feed and Islanding Concerns

During a utility outage, PIPV systems may continue to energize circuits, posing a danger to utility workers and emergency responders. Without proper anti-islanding protection, these systems can unintentionally create hazardous conditions.

Compromised GFCI Protection

Ground fault circuit interrupters are designed based on uni-directional current flow assumptions. PIPV introduces bi-directional current, which may interfere with GFCI sensing and operation, potentially leaving circuits unprotected.

Canadian Electrical Code Implications

Even small-scale generation introduces requirements under the CE Code for embedded energy systems. PIPV installations, if they were to be considered, would need to address several key rules:

- **Rule 64-076** and **Rule 84-022** require clear identification of embedded energy sources, including warning notices, a posted single-line diagram and labeling of all disconnecting means in accessible locations.
- **Rule 64-058** mandates that circuits supplied by multiple sources include appropriate overcurrent protection for all possible current paths.
- **Rule 64-218** requires rapid shutdown capability for photovoltaic systems, enabling emergency responders to safely de-energize the system.

These requirements underscore a critical point: embedded generation cannot be treated as a simple “plug-in” solution. It must be engineered, installed and inspected as part of a coordinated electrical system.

Emerging Standards and Industry Response

Recognizing the growing interest in PIPV systems, UL has developed an Outline of Investigation (**UL 3700**) to establish a path toward safer implementation. A bi-national standard — **ANSI/CAN/UL 3700** — is also under development and is expected to provide a framework for certification in both Canada and the United States.

Plug-In Solar Systems: Why They Are Not Acceptable in Canada CONTINUED

A central requirement in this developing standard is the use of proprietary, non-standard plug and receptacle configurations. This approach fundamentally changes how PIPV systems are deployed and addresses several key risks.

Why Proprietary Connections Matter

The requirement for a unique plug-and-receptacle pairing serves three important purposes:

- **Ensures Professional Installation**
  A specialized outlet cannot be installed by a layperson, ensuring involvement of an LEC and compliance with the Code.
- **Triggers Permitting and Inspection**
  Installation of dedicated equipment requires notification and oversight by the Authority Having Jurisdiction (AHJ), adding an essential layer of safety review.
- **Prevents Misuse of Standard Receptacles**
  By eliminating compatibility with general-purpose outlets, the risk of unsafe back feeding through existing wiring systems is significantly reduced.

Although this approach may limit the consumer "plug-and-play" appeal of these systems, it is a critical step toward mitigating the inherent hazards.

Additional Technical Safeguards

The emerging **UL 3700** framework also includes requirements for:

- Bi-directional GFCI protection
- Anti-islanding functionality
- Enhanced product markings and warnings
- Defined installation instructions

These measures collectively aim to align PIPV technology with established electrical safety principles.

Plug-In Solar Systems: Why They Are Not Acceptable in Canada CONTINUED

Minimum Conditions for Consideration

Until formal standards are published and adopted, any consideration of PIPV equipment should, at a minimum, include:

1. A recognized certification or approval marking
2. A dedicated, non-standard PIPV receptacle installed by a licensed contractor
3. A dedicated branch circuit or appropriate overcurrent protection for all conductors involved

WHAT CONTRACTORS SHOULD TAKE AWAY

PIPV systems represent an evolving technology with potential future applications, but they are not currently suitable for installation on standard electrical systems in Canada. LECs play a critical role in protecting public safety by:

- **Refusing non-approved installations**
- **Educating customers on the associated risks**
- **Ensuring compliance with CE Code requirements**
- **Staying informed as new standards develop**

By approaching PIPV systems with caution and technical rigor, contractors can help ensure that emerging energy solutions are implemented safely and responsibly.

For more information, please refer to:

- ESA's Flash Notice (26-01-FL): Plug-In Photovoltaic (PIPV) Equipment and Systems
- UL White Paper Safety Considerations for Plug-In Photovoltaic (PIPV) Systems

Director's Corner

Message from the Director of Licensing

At the ESA, we believe that a stronger electrical sector is built by a workforce that is representative of the diversity of our province. That is why I am so proud to announce that **ESA has partnered with Indigenous Skills, Employment, Apprenticeship and Development (ISEAD) to deliver a new Licensing and Training Grant for Indigenous electricians.**

Sarah Kempel | Director of Licensing

The grant is designed to reduce licensure barriers for Indigenous electricians and invest in Indigenous talent, entrepreneurship and leadership. The grant will support five Indigenous journeyperson electricians from across Ontario, providing both financial support and guided assistance at key stages of their licensing journey.

Grant recipients will have access to ESA's Pre-Master Electrician course and materials, coverage for the Master Electrician exam and their first-year ME licensing fees. For those interested in entrepreneurship, the program also supports the first-year Electrical Contractor licence, helping to open the door to starting and growing their own electrical contracting businesses.

In addition to financial support, grant recipients will benefit from personalized guidance and mentorship to help navigate each step of the licensing process with confidence, from training through to licensure.

I would like to extend my sincere thanks to our partners at ISEAD, especially Valerie Vanderwyk, Executive Director, for their leadership and collaboration in helping bring this program to life — *miigwetch* ("thank you" in Ojibwe and other Anishinaabe languages).

ISEAD's commitment to advancing opportunities for Indigenous communities aligns closely with ESA's vision of a more inclusive and representative electrical sector, and we are grateful for their partnership and stewardship.

I would also like to recognize the dedication of our Licensing team and the many ESA staff who contributed to developing this initiative, and to our Advisory Councils, particularly Electrical Contractor Registration Agency (ECRA) and its sub-committee, the Master Examining Committee (MEC), for their role in expanding awareness of this grant. Your work continues to strengthen the licensing system and ensures it remains responsive to the needs of those we serve.

This grant reflects the kind of impact we can achieve when we work together to remove barriers and expand access to opportunity. By supporting Indigenous electricians in advancing their skills, leadership and entrepreneurial ambitions, we are helping to build a stronger, more inclusive electrical sector for the future.

Want to learn more about the new Licensing & Training Grant? Visit our website to find details on how to apply and to access downloadable materials, including a brochure, poster and application that you can review or share with others.

Sincerely,
Sarah Kempel | *Director of Licensing*

Electrical Safety Authority

Indigenous Skills Employment Apprenticeship and Development

ESA Cracks Down on Unlicensed Electrical Advertising Online

ESA's ongoing work with Kijiji helps identify non-compliant ads and support a safer online marketplace

Online marketplaces have become a common place for Ontarians to search for electrical services, but they can also create opportunities for unlicensed contractors to advertise illegally.

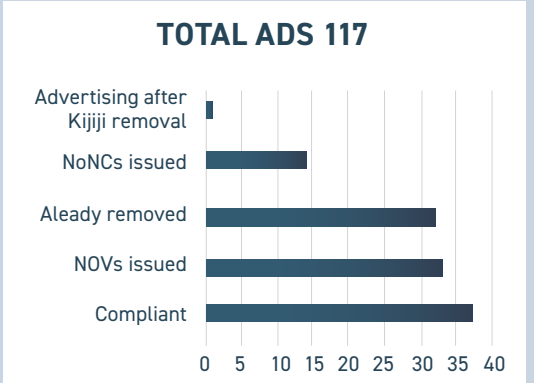
To help address the issue, ESA has worked with Kijiji since 2016 on initiatives focused on consumer awareness and reducing the visibility of non-compliant electrical advertising online. Over time, that collaboration has expanded to support broader efforts to address underground economy activity in Ontario's electrical sector.

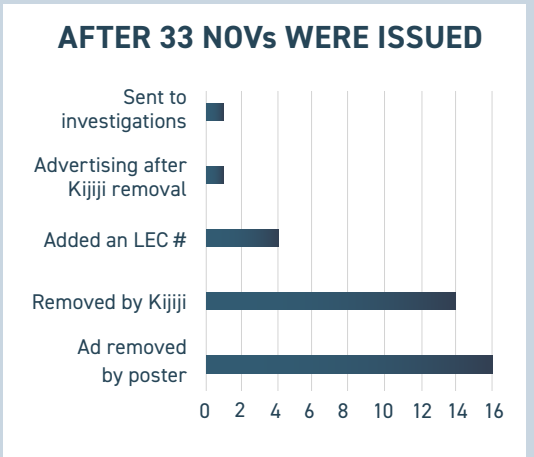
A recent ESA initiative conducted in early 2026 identified a significant number of potentially non-compliant advertisements online.

After reviewing 117 ads, ESA took the following actions:

- **Issued 33 Notices of Violation (NOVs) to unlicensed contractors**
- **Issued 14 Notices of Non-Compliance (NoNC)/Failure to Display to licence holders**
- **Worked with Kijiji to remove 31 ads**
- **Escalated one case for further investigation**

RCP INITIATIVE RESULTS FY26 Q4
Kijiji Advertisements Results





ESA Cracks Down on Unlicensed Electrical Advertising Online CONTINUED

Working closely with Kijiji's team, we have established a protocol for accessing and removing non-compliant ads flagged by ESA. Kijiji removes non-compliant listings within 24 hours of being notified by our team.

These efforts help protect consumers, support Licensed Electrical Contractors (LECs) who follow legal advertising requirements and promote a more level playing field across the industry.

Advertising requirements for LECs

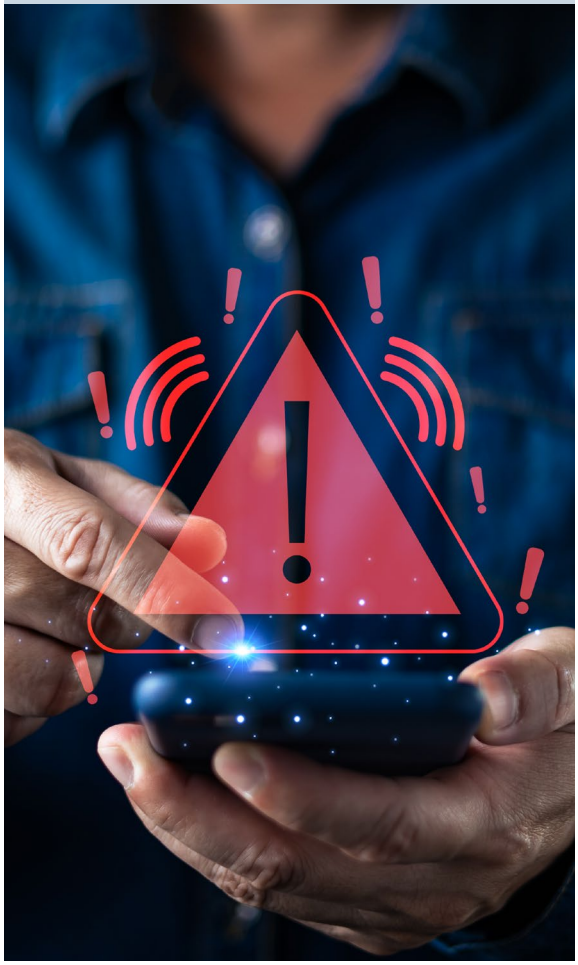
Under Ontario law, LECs are required to clearly display their ECRA/ESA licence number on advertisements and promotional materials, including:

- **Online marketplace listings**
- **Business websites and social media pages**
- **Contracts and invoices**
- **Company vehicles and marketing materials**

Clearly displaying a valid licence number helps consumers identify LECs and make safer hiring decisions.

Online enforcement remains an important part of ESA's broader efforts to address underground economy activity and support a safer, more transparent marketplace for electrical work across Ontario.

If you come across an advertisement that does not display an LEC number, please report it via our online reporting tool. ESA reviews all complaints of non-compliance and takes the appropriate action when warranted.



Save the Date: 2026 Licence Holder Meeting

MARK YOUR CALENDARS — ESA'S 2026 LICENCE HOLDER MEETING WILL TAKE PLACE VIRTUALLY ON:

November 19, 2026
2:30 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.

WHAT TO EXPECT

- **UPDATES ON INITIATIVES IMPACTING LICENCE HOLDERS**
- **INSIGHTS INTO COMPLIANCE AND ENFORCEMENT TRENDS**
- **OPPORTUNITIES TO CONNECT WITH ESA TECHNICAL ADVISORS**

Additional agenda details will be shared in the coming months.

DON'T MISS OUT

Invitations and registration details will be sent to the email address associated with your ESA licence during the last week of October.

Learn more and view recordings from previous Licence Holder Meetings

HAVE A QUESTION FOR ESA'S LICENSING AND TECHNICAL ADVISOR TEAMS?

Registration may not be open yet, but we are still accepting licensing and technical questions in advance of the meeting.

If there is a topic or question you would like us to address, please email: **esa.lhm@electricalsafety.on.ca**.

We look forward to connecting with you virtually this November!

Supporting Compliance: Resources for Designated Master Electricians and Licensed Electrical Contractors

Practical tools to help licence holders meet their responsibilities with confidence

The ME Competency Profile Resource Library is designed to support Designated Master Electricians (DMEs) and Licenced Electrical Contractors (LECs) in upholding the highest standards of professionalism and safety. This easy-to-access collection of voluntary resources offers practical guidance to support compliance, continuous learning and strong business practices.

Whether you're refreshing your technical knowledge or strengthening oversight and planning, the library provides clear, relevant information to help deliver high-quality electrical contracting services and support electrical safety across Ontario.

RESOURCE SPOTLIGHT: FREE COMPETENT DME MODULE

DMEs play a vital role in overseeing and planning electrical work performed on behalf of a LEC. To support DMEs in this role, ESA has developed ***The Competent Designated Master Electrician*** module. This free 25-minute learning resource focuses on real-world scenarios DMEs may encounter.

The module walks through common decision-making situations related to:

- **Ontario Regulation 570/05**
- **The Ontario Electrical Safety Code**
- **Consumer protection, health and safety, employment and business legislation**

It's a practical way to strengthen your understanding of DME responsibilities and reinforce compliance in day-to-day operations.

Access the free module:
ESAsafe.com/contractors/the-competent-dme

MAKE YOUR MASTER ELECTRICIAN DESIGNATION VISIBLE

Master Electricians may use the designation "**ME**" or "**Master Electrician**" after their name (for example, *John Doe, ME*).

Displaying your designation on business cards, email signatures, resumes and professional profiles helps identify your credentials and professional expertise to customers, employers and industry peers.

It's a simple way to showcase a designation you've worked hard to achieve.

Licensing at a Glance: Numbers for FY2026

Unlicensed Contractor Community

ACTIVITY	FY2026
Notice of Violations Issued	**462**
Investigations	**76**
Convictions	**29**
Conviction Outcomes	**$158,000** (+63% YOY) 15 days jail time
Administrative Penalty Orders	**110**
Penalty Amount	**$363,502**

Licensed Electrical Contractors

ACTIVITY	FY2025	FY2026
Licensed Electrical Contractors	**10,354**	**10,397**
Master Electricians	**16,921**	**17,026**
Licences Suspended	**208**	**103**
Licences with Conditions	**27**	**12**
Investigations	**9**	**4**
Notices of Non-Compliance	**59**	**51**

Marking a $250,000 Milestone with Sunnybrook

Celebrating five years of giving to advance burn care, recovery and support for patients and families at Sunnybrook's Ross Tilley Burn Centre

ESA, in alignment with the Electrical Contractor Registration Agency (ECRA) Advisory Council, is proud to mark the completion of a $250,000 donation to Sunnybrook's Ross Tilley Burn Centre over the past five years, supporting patients recovering from severe burn injuries, including those from electrical contact.

A Longstanding Partnership

This milestone builds on two decades of support for Sunnybrook, which began in 2006. Over that time, contributions have helped the Ross Tilley Burn Centre maintain its role as Canada's largest burn treatment facility and Ontario's only comprehensive adult burn program.

This partnership underscores ESA's ongoing commitment not only to preventing electrical injuries, but also to supporting those impacted by them, reflecting a shared dedication to safety, prevention and advancing care for those effected by burn injuries.

> **"As we mark this achievement, we're celebrating more than a donation — we're recognizing the transformational impact it has on patients and families," said Patience Cathcart, ESA Public Safety Officer.**

Supporting Care and Recovery

Donations have contributed to improvements that benefit both patients and their families, including:

- **Advancing critical initiatives** across multiple areas within the Burn Centre, including support for electrical injury research to enable better understanding and treatment
- **Funding patient care programs** that help deliver exceptional, comprehensive support to individuals throughout their recovery and helping improve quality of life following injury
- **Contributing to specialized rehabilitation and programming** for those recovering from electrical injuries
- **Supporting the development of a new burn operating room** to enhance care and treatment capacity

These enhancements support the Burn Centre's ability to deliver specialized, comprehensive care.

This donation reflects the commitment of ESA, ECRA AC and the LEC community to support not only electrical safety, but also the systems that care for Ontarians when serious injuries occur.

ESA Brings Electrical Safety into the Real Estate Conversation

Reaching real estate professionals to promote safer homes and licensed electrical work

This spring, ESA's Director of Licensing, Sarah Kempel, brought an important message to Ontario's real estate professionals. Through a series of webinars with regional real estate associations, ESA is expanding its outreach to highlight the critical role Licensed Electrical Contractors (LECs) play in keeping homebuyers and sellers safe.

The webinars are part of ESA's broader collaboration with real estate organizations across the province. Recognizing that agents are often present at key decision-making moments, ESA is equipping them with practical knowledge about electrical permits, recent renovations and hidden risks that may otherwise go unnoticed.

By reaching professionals who guide buyers and sellers through transactions, ESA aims to ensure homeowners receive accurate information earlier to help them make safer decisions and increase the likelihood they'll hire an LEC when electrical work is involved.

Bringing Electrical Safety to the Forefront

In her presentation, Sarah reinforced a reality LECs know well: electrical systems are often overlooked because they're hidden behind walls. But when issues arise, such as unpermitted work or installations that are not up to code, the consequences can affect not only safety, but also timelines, costs and confidence in a transaction.

Sarah's message to agents was clear: hiring LECs and pulling permits isn't optional — it's required by law and critical to electrical safety.

That's where LECs come in.

Sarah emphasized that by hiring LECs, pulling ESA permits, completing work to code and ensuring inspections are carried out, homeowners gain a level of assurance that supports smoother real estate transactions.

ESA Brings Electrical Safety into the Real Estate Conversation

CONTINUED

A Real-World Reminder

To illustrate the risks, Sarah shared a case study that underscored the value of licensed work.

In a competitive housing market, a homeowner made cosmetic updates ahead of a sale, replacing outlets and switches to modernize the space. However, the home's existing aluminum wiring required specific compatible devices. The installations were completed without an LEC and with no permits or inspection.

The issue remained hidden until years later when the new homeowners noticed a burning smell. When an LEC was finally called in, multiple improperly installed devices were discovered throughout the home, creating a widespread fire risk. What seemed like a simple upgrade resulted in extensive repairs and significant unexpected costs.

The takeaway for real estate professionals is that electrical work isn't just cosmetic. What looks safe isn't always safe. This reinforces why hiring LECs (qualified professionals), along with ESA's safety oversight (which includes pulling a permit and receiving a Certificate of Acceptance) is so important.

Strengthening Awareness, Supporting the Trade

Alongside real-world examples, the webinar equipped agents with practical tools to identify risk. Sarah highlighted common red flags of unlicensed work, encouraged verification of ESA permits and stressed the importance of requesting a Certificate of Acceptance as proof that work has been reviewed and is up to code.

For ESA licence holders, this outreach reinforces the value you bring to every job. By educating real estate professionals, ESA is helping ensure that more Ontarians understand when, and why, to call an LEC.

It also means more informed clients, better conversations at the point of sale and, ultimately, safer homes across the province.

Because while buyers may focus on finishes and fixtures, it's the work behind the walls, and the licensed professionals who stand behind it, that truly protects them.

More Contractors Are Managing Notifications and Inspections Through ESA ON Mobile

Year-over-year growth in key app features reflects the increasing role ESA ON Mobile plays in helping contractors manage work from the field

Keeping track of notifications, inspections and project documentation is an important part of running a successful electrical contracting business. Increasingly, Licensed Electrical Contractors (LECs) are using ESA ON Mobile to manage those tasks wherever work takes them.

Strong Growth Across Key Features

Use of several key ESA ON Mobile features increased significantly over the past year:

- **Inspection scheduling increased 86%, from 7,222 to 13,461**
- **Notification status checks increased 63%, from 35,820 to 58,486**
- **Evidence submissions increased 73%, from 16,453 to 28,515**
- **Evidence-related notifications increased 62%, from 3,065 to 4,963**

The growth reflects how LECs are increasingly using the app to stay informed, schedule inspections and manage documentation while on the go.

Supporting Business Organization and Compliance

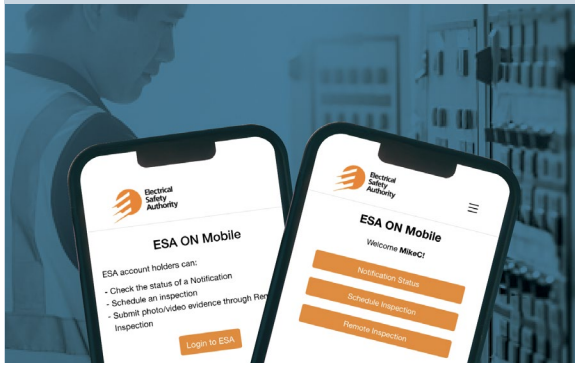
For contractors managing multiple jobs and notifications, having convenient access to key ESA services can help reduce administrative burden and make it easier to stay on top of inspection requirements.

Whether checking the status of a notification, scheduling an inspection or responding to a request for additional information, ESA ON Mobile provides quick access to important project details when it's needed.

CONTINUING TO EVOLVE

ESA continues to enhance the ESA ON Mobile app based on user needs. Recent updates include an ability to upload photos directly from a device's camera roll when submitting evidence, providing additional flexibility when documenting work in the field.

Learn more about ESA ON Mobile and explore its features



2024 Code Updates Are Changing Pool and Hot Tub Installations

ESA Technical Advisor Trevor Tremblay breaks down new Ontario Electrical Safety Code updates — and explains why getting bonding right is critical for every pool and hot tub installation

LISTEN TO FULL EPISODE

EPISODE 20
Why New Pool and Hot Tub Code Changes Matter More Than Ever

Click Here to Listen

Not Just Another Install

Pool and hot tub installations may seem like routine projects, but for electrical contractors, they require careful attention to detail to ensure code safety requirements are met.

"We are seeing reports of shocks at hot tubs," says Trevor. "We had one example of people just relaxing and they started feeling electric shocks because of a nearby metal fence."

These real-world incidents are exactly what the updates in the latest Ontario Electrical Safety Code (OESC) are designed to address.

Understanding the Risk

At the center of these changes is stray voltage, which is something many contractors have encountered, but not always fully understood.

"It really all comes down to stray current and the earth," Trevor explains, "as electricity is trying to find every path back to its source."

In North America's multi-grounded system, that path isn't always predictable. When there's a difference in electrical potential, the human body can become part of the path.

That means a person stepping out from water onto concrete, or coming into contact with nearby metal, can experience a shock.

For contractors, the takeaway is simple: you're not just installing a pool or hot tub — you're managing an entire electrical environment.

2024 Code Updates Are Changing Pool and Hot Tub Installations CONTINUED

What's Changed

The updated Code shifts the approach from trying to eliminate stray current to eliminating dangerous voltage differences.

"The entire goal of the change is to make everything around the pool equal potential," Trevor says.

To achieve that, the 2024 version of the code introduced several important updates:

- **More defined pool shell bonding requirements**
- **New perimeter bonding rules**
- **Mandatory water bonding for insulated pool types**
- **Expanded hot tub bonding requirements**

These changes are designed to create an equipotential electrical plane across all conductive elements — reducing the conditions that lead to shocks.

Why It Matters

These updates go beyond compliance — they directly affect your time, liability and reputation.

Getting bonding right upfront can help prevent complex troubleshooting later and reduce the likelihood of callbacks tied to shock complaints.

NEED A HELPFUL RESOURCE ON POOL AND HOT TUB INSTALLATIONS?

Check ESA Bulletin 68-8-4: *Bonding of swimming pool, hot tub, and spa*

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Raising the Plan Review Threshold for Renewable Energy Installations

Approved Director's Order on Ontario Electrical Safety Code Rule 2-010

ESA has approved a Director's Order **increasing the plan review threshold for certain renewable energy installations from 10 kW to 12 kW.** The change reflects evolving equipment sizes and industry practices, while maintaining a strong focus on safety and compliance.

Updated plan review threshold

Under the Ontario Electrical Safety Code (OESC), installations within the scope of Section 64 — such as solar photovoltaic systems, energy storage systems (ESS), as well as electrical vehicle supply equipment (EVSE) — require plan review before work begins when they exceed a specified output.

The Director's Order **increases this threshold from 10 kW to 12 kW** and applies to the systems noted above.

Reflecting today's equipment and installations

The existing 10 kW threshold has been in place since 2007, when it aligned with earlier renewable energy programs and typical system sizes.

Today, many commonly used systems — particularly residential solar and battery storage — are designed with outputs above 10 kW. In some cases, installers select standard equipment sizes that fall between 10 and 12 kW, even when the project's energy needs are lower.

To remain below the current threshold, some systems are intentionally limited, or "derated," so they do not exceed a 10 kW output.

Raising the threshold better aligns installations with actual output requirements and eliminates the need for this workaround.

Raising the Plan Review Threshold for Renewable Energy Installations CONTINUED

What this means for contractors

Installations between 10 kW and 12 kW no longer trigger mandatory plan review. This:

- **Simplifies project workflows** by removing an administrative step
- **Reduces project timelines,** as work would not be delayed pending review
- **Lowers associated costs,** depending on project requirements

It's important to note that ESA fees themselves are not changing, as inspectors must continue to spend time visiting sites and reviewing installations — especially as technology evolves rapidly and safety must be maintained. However, contractors and customers may see lower overall project costs where a plan review is no longer required.

Removing the plan review requirement does not shift responsibility away from designers or installers to ensure that work is code-compliant. Voluntary plan review and consultation with ESA inspectors will remain available for those who choose to use them.

Comparable systems, consistent safety approach

ESA's review found that systems in the 10–12 kW range are similar in design, configuration and complexity to those below 10 kW.

ESA's review determined that increasing the threshold does not introduce additional safety risk when installations are completed in accordance with the Code.

The update also supports alignment with broader industry changes, including evolving standards for distributed generation and electrification across Ontario.

Supporting continued electrification

As adoption of solar PV, energy storage and EV charging infrastructure continues to grow, installations are becoming more common across residential and commercial settings.

Adjusting the plan review threshold is one way ESA is working to ensure requirements remain practical and responsive to these changes — while continuing to protect public safety.

IMPLEMENTATION

The Director's Order has been approved, and the updated **12 kW threshold will go into effect in July 2026**. Installations between 10 kW and 12 kW no longer require mandatory plan review, while voluntary plan review and consultation with ESA inspectors remain available.

For more information on ESA consultations and Code updates, visit: ESAsafe.com.

Hire an LEC Campaign Delivers Strongest Results Yet

Strategic targeting and expanded outreach helped drive record engagement with Ontario homeowners

Results are now in from ESA's 2025 *Hire an LEC* campaign, with the initiative delivering its strongest performance to date.

Designed to help Ontarians understand the importance of hiring a Licensed Electrical Contractor (LEC), the campaign used strategic targeting to reach homeowners undertaking renovation and home improvement projects, particularly in areas identified as higher risk for unlicensed electrical work.

The campaign generated **more than 79 million impressions across Ontario** and drove measurable increases in both public awareness and consumer engagement.

Most notably, 23% of Ontario homeowners can now correctly identify ESA as responsible for electrical safety — the highest level recorded in the past decade and a 15-point increase over the previous year.

Post-campaign research also showed:

- **Higher familiarity with LECs:** Homeowners exposed to the campaign were significantly more likely to understand that only an LEC can legally be hired to perform electrical work in Ontario (62% vs. 34%).
- **Increased use of ESA tools:** More than 50,000 visits to ESA's Find an LEC tool during the campaign period, a 4% increase year-over-year.

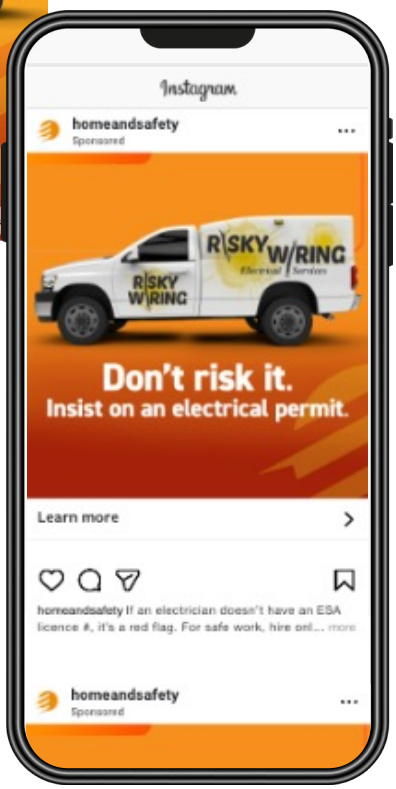
The results show that targeted consumer awareness can help more Ontarians recognize the risks of unlicensed electrical work and understand how to find an LEC.

Sample Campaign Assets

Digital billboard

Pinterest Ad

Instagram Ad



Hire an LEC Campaign Delivers Strongest Results Yet CONTINUED

Video Reel

Campaign returns with expanded reach

Building on last year's results, the *Hire an LEC* campaign returned to market in early May and will continue through November with several new and expanded tactics aimed at reaching homeowners earlier in the renovation process.

In-Person Activation – Sketchy electricians at Home Hardware

New for this year:

- **Expanded partnerships with Ontario real estate associations** to help reach homebuyers and sellers during property transactions
- **New outreach through Home Hardware locations** in priority markets
- **New "Permit Pete" micro-moment content** focused on common DIY electrical projects where homeowners may not realize a permit is required
- **New digital channels**, including Reddit, aimed at reaching homeowners actively researching renovation, DIY and local home improvement projects

The campaign remains focused on helping consumers understand the risks associated with unlicensed electrical work and how to verify a contractor's licence using ESA's online tools.

To learn more about the campaign, visit ESAsafe.com/HireLicensed

Summer Workloads Are Up, Make Sure Your Code Knowledge Is Too

Why summer is the best time to refresh your code knowledge

For many contractors and electricians, summer is one of the busiest times of the year. Service upgrades, renovations, service calls, outdoor electrical work and new construction projects can quickly fill schedules up and keep crews moving from one jobsite to the next.

But as workloads increase, so does the potential for mistakes, overlooked details, potential defects, and, ultimately, safety risks.

That's why summer is an ideal time to ensure your knowledge of the Ontario Electrical Safety Code (OESC) is up to date with the latest amended requirements.

Even experienced professionals can benefit from revisiting Code training and brushing up on common practices. With the pace of work picking up during warmer months, staying current can help reduce defects, save you time and money and support safer work on site.

The challenge, of course, is finding the time.

For many, stepping away from work for a full day of training during peak season isn't realistic. That's where our online, self-paced course can make a difference. Online OESC training can fit into any schedule and doesn't have to disrupt operations.

Flexible online learning also makes it easier to:

- Refresh Code knowledge before inspections
- Reinforce safe work practices
- Reduce repeat defects and rework
- Support apprentices and newer team members
- Stay informed on evolving requirements and industry trends

Investing in training doesn't just support compliance, it supports confidence, consistency and quality workmanship. During a busy season, staying sharp matters. A small investment in refreshing OESC knowledge today can help prevent larger issues tomorrow.

LEARN MORE ABOUT OUR 2024 OESC NEW AND AMENDED REQUIREMENTS COURSE

OESC TRAINING

Not sure if online learning is right for you? Check out the course demo and see what to expect before registering.

DON'T MISS AN UPDATE

Be the first to hear about new training opportunities, industry updates and important safety and technical course information. Subscribe to ESA Training Solutions emails and follow us on LinkedIn to stay informed.

SUBSCRIBE HERE

FOLLOW US ON LINKEDIN

Training is a non-regulatory service offered by the Electrical Safety Authority (ESA). Electrical safety and technical courses may be offered by other providers. View more information about ESA's non-regulatory activities here.

ESA Transitioning Away from Cheque Payments

Starting September 1, 2027, ESA will no longer accept cheque payments as it moves toward faster, more secure and reliable digital payment methods

ESA is providing advance notice to account holders that cheque payments will no longer be accepted beginning **September 1, 2027**.

Account holders who currently pay by cheque are encouraged to begin planning ahead for the transition. ESA will continue to accept:

- **Credit card payments**
- **Telephone or online banking payments**
- **EFT/wire transfer payments**

The move toward digital payments is intended to help:

- **Improve payment processing times**
- **Reduce the risk of loss or delayed payments**
- **Provide a more secure payment experience**
- **Simplify payment tracking and reconciliation**

HAVE QUESTIONS?

Account holders are encouraged to review ESA's **Cheque Payment FAQ** for important timelines, payment instructions and transition support resources.

Download Cheque Payment FAQ

How well do you know the Ontario Electrical Safety Code? Take our quiz and test your technical knowledge.

Q1

For the installation of electric vehicle supply equipment (EVSE), in other than single dwellings, when is a Plan Review submission required?

a. Plan Review submission is never required for EVSEs

b. Plan Review submission is always required for EVSEs

c. When installing two or more EVSEs

d. When the total aggregate nameplate ratings of the EVSE exceeds 20% of the service equipment

Q2

Which of the following conditions must be met to permit conductors to be connected to different power sources installed in the same enclosure?

a. The installation is existing

b. The alternate power source is the same voltage as the existing source

c. A warning label affixed to the enclosure states “more than one source of supply”

d. All of the above

Q3

What is the maximum continuous outdoor perimeter of a dwelling unit before a second duplex receptacle is required to be installed?

a. 15 m

b. 17 m

c. 20 m

d. 25 m

Answers

Question 1:
d. When the total nameplate rating of the EVSE exceeds 20% of the service equipment
Ref. Rule 2-010 1) f).

Question 2:
d. All of the above
Ref. Rule 12-3030 1) d) and 3).

Question 3:
c. 20 m
Ref. Rule 26-724 2).

Rule 2-004(5): Giving Inspections Enough Notice Helps Keep Projects Moving

Late or incomplete inspection requests can lead to delays, rework and missed opportunities to address issues earlier in the project lifecycle

Projects move quickly, timelines shift and schedules change. But one of the most common issues ESA inspectors continue to see are inspection requests submitted too late or without enough detail to properly support the work being inspected.

Providing adequate notice and accurate project information helps inspectors prepare for site visits, coordinate support where needed and keep projects moving efficiently.

What Rule 2-004(5) requires

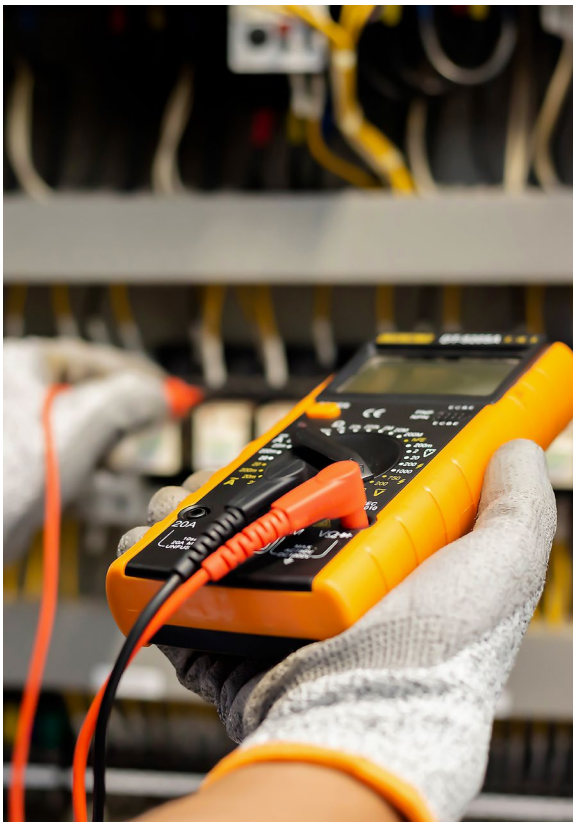
Under Rule 2-004 (5), contractors must provide ESA with at least 48 hours' notice when work is ready for inspection or connection authorization. Additional notice may be required for remote or difficult-to-access locations.

Booking inspections

Scheduling rough-in, trench, service and final inspections is easy through ESA's Customer Service Centre by calling 1-877-372-7233 or through ESA ON Mobile.

ESA ON Mobile allows account holders to:

- Check notification status
- Schedule inspections
- Submit qualification evidence through remote inspection



Common issues inspectors are seeing

- Same-day inspection requests
- Rough-in inspections requested after work has been concealed or completed
- Missing or incomplete project details
- Requests submitted before the site is ready for inspection
- Limited access to equipment or installation areas during inspection
- Inspection requests submitted after utility disconnect-and-hold arrangements have already been made

Rule 2-004(5): Giving Inspections Enough Notice Helps Keep Projects Moving CONTINUED

Why rough-in inspections matter

Rough-in inspections provide an opportunity to review materials, installation methods and project scope before work is covered, concealed or energized.

Identifying concerns earlier in the process can help avoid:

- Costly rework
- Scheduling delays
- Additional site visits
- Project disruptions later in construction

This is especially important for more complex installations, including solar projects, where inspectors may need access to equipment while it is still accessible from the ground.

TIPS TO HELP KEEP PROJECTS MOVING

- Submit inspection requests as early as possible
- Include complete and accurate project details
- Schedule rough-in inspections before work is concealed
- Confirm the site is ready before requesting inspection

Clear and proactive communication helps inspectors support your work efficiently and helps keep projects on schedule.