

Master Electrician  
Roles and Responsibilities

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Master electricians in Alberta are members of a regulated profession and the only contractors who can obtain electrical permits in the province. As regulated professionals, master electricians must fulfill certain legal responsibilities. The purpose of this document is:

1. To clarify the legal responsibilities of master electricians.
2. To provide guidance to Master Electricians on how to fulfill their legal responsibilities.
3. To inform Master Electricians of the potential consequences of non-compliance.

## 2. BACKGROUND

Under the Safety Codes Act (Act), the Safety Codes Council is responsible for issuing certificates of competency to qualified master electrician candidates, which involves overseeing the associated examination, code update training requirements and renewal (refer to Appendix 1). Additionally, the Council has the jurisdiction to investigate complaints against master electricians; for consequences of non-compliance, see section 5.

## 3. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Master electricians have three main responsibilities, which can be traced back to the Act and its regulations (refer to Appendix 1).

Provide oversight of permitted work

As permit holders, as defined in the Permit Regulation, master electricians have a legal duty to “undertake the construction, process or activity in accordance with the Act and applicable codes and standards.” Additionally, master electricians who complete work regulated by the Act are considered contractors. The Act specifies that “A contractor who undertakes construction, operation or maintenance of or builds or installs any thing to which this Act applies shall ensure that this Act is complied with.”

In other words, master electricians must ensure that any work completed under a permit in their name complies with the Act and all applicable codes and standards, no matter who completes the work. To do so, they must provide oversight of the work completed; for more details on what constitutes sufficient oversight, refer to section 4 and Appendix 1.

Conduct themselves in an ethical and professional manner

As per the Act, the Council “may review and formulate [...] qualifications required of a person to hold a certificate of competency”. One of the requirements for master electrician certification and renewal is agreement to abide by the Master Electrician Code of Ethics, which requires master electricians to conduct themselves in an ethical, professional, and responsible manner, and most importantly, to abide by the Act, applicable legislation, regulations, and Council bylaws and policies. For more details on the Code of Ethics, refer to section 5.

Maintain their certificates of competency

The Certification and Permit Regulation establishes annual renewals for master electrician certificates of competency. It also specifies that certificate holders may be asked to complete code update training to maintain their certification. In other words, master electricians must maintain their certificate and to do so, they must demonstrate continued competency with respect to applicable codes.

#### 4. PERMIT OVERSIGHT: WHAT IS REQUIRED?

As established above, master electricians must provide the level of oversight necessary to ensure the requirements under the Act are met. It is up to each individual master electrician to select appropriate oversight methods while taking into consideration factors such as the amount of permits issued to the master electrician, as well as project size, type, and risk level.

However, when asked, master electricians should be able to answer the following question for each individual permit issued in their name:

- What systems do you have in place to ensure the work related to this permit is undertaken in accordance with the Act and applicable codes and standards?

Specifically, they should be able to answer the following in detail:

- How do you ensure that the work completed under this permit is ready for inspection before inspections are requested?
- How do you ensure that you are aware of any deficiencies raised during inspections of work completed under this permit? How do you ensure they are addressed?
- When asked by the authority-having jurisdiction (municipality or agency), how do you ensure that you can speak knowledgeably to any work completed under this permit?

If you cannot answer the above questions confidently for each permit, you may not be providing sufficient oversight. For examples of sufficient oversight, please refer to Appendix 2.

**Please note:** While the absence of deficiencies or re-inspection requirements is helpful feedback for the oversight systems you have in place, it is not sufficient to demonstrate that you fulfill your legal obligations under the Act. You must be able to explain your approach to oversight if asked.

#### 5. ETHICAL AND PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

The Code of Ethics contains a list of ethical obligations that all master electricians must abide by. All master electricians should familiarize themselves with this code; however, two of the key obligations are to:

1. Conduct themselves in an ethical, professional, and responsible manner.
2. Carry out their duties in accordance with the Act and other applicable legislation, regulations, bylaws, and policies.

For more details on the Code of Ethics, please refer to Appendix 1.



## 6. CONSEQUENCES OF NON-COMPLIANCE

As per the Act, complaints about the conduct or competency of a master electrician may be made following the Council's complaints investigations process. Should an investigation find that a master electrician has violated the Act, regulations, codes, standards, Council policies or procedures, or the terms of the master electrician's certification, they may face the following consequences:

- Progressive disciplinary action by the Council: If a master electrician is found to have violated any of their legal responsibilities under the Act, or their professional responsibilities as per the Council's policies or the Master Electrician Code of Ethics, they may face corrective action by the Administrator of Certification. Depending on the severity of the violation, potential consequences may include a letter of reprimand, the requirement to complete additional training, short or long-term suspension, or even a cancellation of their certificate of competency.
- Fines, litigation, or legal damages: Section 67(4) of the Act indicates that a person "who contravenes this Act" is guilty of an offence and may face a fine under section 68. In the event of an injury to a person or property, a master electrician who did not take reasonable steps to ensure that they met their duties may be liable to a lawsuit in negligence and may be ordered to pay damages to the person or persons suffering the injury.



## APPENDIX 1: KEY LEGISLATION, REGULATIONS, AND POLICIES

The responsibilities of master electricians come from the Safety Codes Act, its regulations, and the codes and standards adopted under it. The tables below outline the relevant sections that address the responsibilities of master electricians.

### *Safety Codes Act*

SECTION	RELEVANT LANGUAGE
Section 1 (1) (h)	(h) “contractor” means a person or organization that does or undertakes to do, either for the person’s or organization’s own use or benefit or for that of another, whether or not for the purposes of gain, any process or activity to which this Act applies;
Section 8	A contractor who undertakes construction, operation or maintenance of or builds or installs any thing to which this Act applies shall ensure that this Act is complied with.
Section 19 (g)	The Council [...] may review and formulate classifications of certificates of competency and qualifications required of a person to hold a certificate of competency.
Section 42(3)	An Administrator may suspend or cancel a certificate of competency if the Administrator, on reasonable and probable grounds, is of the opinion that (a) the person no longer complies with the requirements of this Act for a certificate of competency, or (b) the person does not comply with this Act when acting pursuant to the certificate of competency.
Section 44 (4)	A person who acts pursuant to a permit shall do so in accordance with this Act and shall comply with this Act and any terms and conditions contained in the permit.
Section 67 (4) and (5)	(4) A person who (a) contravenes this Act, (b) contravenes a condition in a permit, certificate or variance (c) contravenes an order, or (d) fails to carry out any action required in an order to be taken within the time specified in it, is guilty of an offence.  (5) A person who is guilty of an offence under this Act is liable on conviction for each day or part of a day on which the offence occurs or continues.



**Permit Regulation**

SECTION	RELEVANT LANGUAGE
Section 8	<p>Electrical permit</p> <p>(1) A permit in the electrical discipline is required to install, alter or add to an electrical system. . .</p>
Section 9	<p>Electrical discipline permit holder</p> <p>(1) A permit issuer may issue a permit in the electrical discipline to the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) a master electrician for any electrical system within the scope of the master electrician’s certification;</li> <li>(b) a restricted master electrician for any electrical system within the scope of the restricted master electrician’s certification;</li> </ul>
Section 24	<p>Responsibilities of the permit holder</p> <p>On the issuance of a permit, the permit holder must</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) comply with the terms and conditions of the permit,</li> <li>(b) undertake the construction, process or activity in accordance with the Act and applicable codes and standards,</li> <li>(c) notify the permit issuer                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) if the permit holder does not intend to complete the undertaking, or</li> <li>(ii) if there is a change in ownership from the owner as stated on the permit application,</li> </ul> </li> <li>(d) ensure that all plans and specifications required to apply for the permit are available at the construction site at all reasonable times for inspection by a safety codes officer, and</li> </ul>

**Certification and Permit Regulation**

SECTION	RELEVANT LANGUAGE
Section 4	<p>(4) The Administrator may renew a master electrician certificate of competency issued under subsection (1) or (2) if the holder of the certificate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) has paid the appropriate fee, and</li> <li>(b) has completed, to the satisfaction of the Administrator, any code update training that the Administrator requires the holder to complete.</li> </ul> <p>(6) The term of a master electrician certificate of competency issued or renewed under this section is one year from the date of the issuance or renewal unless the Administrator specifies a longer term.</p>
Section 7	<p>The holder of a certificate of competency issued under this Regulation shall</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) prominently display it at the holder’s place of business or employment, or</li> <li>(b) have it available to be produced immediately on the request of the Administrator or a safety codes officer.</li> </ul>



**Master Electrician Certification Policy**

SECTION	RELEVANT LANGUAGE
4.2	A master electrician may be subject to corrective action for non-adherence to the Act and Regulation. Corrective action may include a meeting with the Administrator, a letter of reprimand, successful completion of training identified by the Administrator, a short term suspension (up to 30 days), a long term suspension (up to six months), or cancellation of the certificate of competency.
4.3	The Administrator may reinstate a certificate of competency that has been suspended or cancelled where: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4.3.1. the holder of the certificate of competency applies for reinstatement;</li> <li>and 4.3.2. the issue(s) that resulted in the suspension or cancellation have been corrected to the satisfaction of the Administrator</li> </ul>

**Master Electrician Code of Ethics**

SECTION	RELEVANT LANGUAGE
B) 1	conduct themselves in an ethical, professional, and responsible manner;
B) 2	carry out their duties in accordance with the Safety Codes Act and other applicable legislation, regulations, bylaws, and policies;





## APPENDIX 2: INDICATORS OF SUFFICIENT AND INSUFFICIENT OVERSIGHT

### Indicators of sufficient oversight

The following are indicators of sufficient oversight and are provided for illustrative purposes only. It is ultimately up to the master electrician to determine what systems they will put in place to be able to ensure that work they are completing is undertaken “in accordance with the Act and applicable codes and standards”.

**Direct oversight:** Indicators of sufficient direct oversight usually involve the master electrician being on site regularly or much of the time, for example:

- The master electrician completes much or all of the work themselves.
- The master electrician works on site along with other qualified persons and supervises the work directly.
- The master electrician does not perform the work but visits the site to provide guidance.
- The master electrician ensures that work is code compliant by inspecting it prior to requesting an inspection.
- The master electrician communicates directly with the SCO and/or is onsite for inspections.

**Indirect Oversight:** Indicators of sufficient indirect oversight usually involve the master electrician implementing a quality assurance system, and enforcing it through spot checks or audits, for example:

- The master electrician is aware of the qualifications of the persons completing the installations and adjusts guidance accordingly.
- The master electrician communicates with a qualified person who supervises the work directly, and is available to provide guidance to those performing the work.
- The master electrician has implemented a process to ensure the work completed is code compliant prior to requesting an inspection.
- The master electrician ensures that a qualified person is available to the SCO and is onsite for inspections.

**Further indicators of sufficient oversight:**

- The master electrician can produce a current list of open permits issued in their name including status.
- Work completed has few deficiencies/does not require frequent re-inspections.
- Deficiencies that are identified are addressed quickly and comprehensively.
- When asked, the master electrician can speak knowledgeably about each permit issued in their name.
- The authority-having jurisdiction (municipality or agency) can easily contact the master electrician, or a qualified person designated by the master electrician, to communicate about permitted work.

### Indicators of insufficient oversight

The following are indicators of insufficient oversight. Note that some of the indicators below may also be considered unethical and unprofessional behavior.

- Permits issued in the master electrician’s name require frequent re-inspections.
- Safety codes officer inspection reports associated with permits issued in the master electrician’s name frequently cite deficiencies or unsafe conditions.
- The master electrician cannot produce a current list of open permits issued in their name.
- The master electrician obtains a permit for another person as a personal favour, or in exchange for a fee, without providing oversight over the subsequent work.
- The master electrician relies on others to provide oversight on the basis of reputation or personal relationship, without providing oversight or auditing the work themselves.
- The master electrician has too many open permits to be able to provide reasonable oversight over all of them.
- The master electrician is unable or unwilling to visit the site directly if required.
- When contacted by the safety codes officer, the master electrician is unable to speak to the work completed.