

Limits on L&I Electrical Inspections COVID-19 April 3, 2020

COVID-19 electrical inspection information for internal and external customers. Subject to change if limits change after date above.

1. Why are there limits on L&I electrical inspections?

- Together, we are going to get through this. Before the pandemic, L&I inspectors visited about 1000 worksites everyday - homes, businesses, and construction sites. Now, if contagious, they could pass on the virus, and that may pose a greater risk than not doing an inspection.
- The Governor's "[Stay Home, Stay Healthy](#)" order restricts mobility to help prevent spread of the virus. In general, the order does not allow commercial or residential construction.
- The Governor's March 25 guidance memo on construction clarifies limits on construction:
https://www.governor.wa.gov/sites/default/files/03.25.20-Construction%20Guidance%20Memo%20%28002%29.pdf?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery.

A summary of how electrical inspections fit in to all this follows below.

2. What kind of electrical inspections can L&I do right now?

- Essential Inspections for installations made in essential facilities that directly support:
 - Public health – medical, sewer, water, etc.
 - Food chain – farms, crop or food spoilage, food processing, grocery stores, transportation, etc.
 - Human shelter:
 - Inspections for emergency electrical repairs that would cause someone to lose shelter if left undone. Examples: failed heating or cooling systems, damaged or hazardous electrical systems, failed sewer or well systems, storm damage, etc.
 - Inspections required for occupancy related to pending real estate transactions.
- Inspections of energized installations made by those who are not certified electricians. (Potential fire/life safety hazard)
- Inspections for publicly funded capital projects deemed essential by a state agency such as the Department of Enterprise Services or Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction. Be prepared to provide documentation from the awarding agency deeming the project essential if requested.

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3. What kind of inspections are not essential?

Inspections of elective installations, meaning installations done because it was a good time to do them, or ongoing installations on projects that are not essential according to the Governor's order. While limits are on, it is not the time to start or continue an elective project.

- Examples of elective installations:
 - Swimming pools and hot tubs; residential remodels and outbuildings; new residential and commercial construction; new electrical services, feeders, or circuits; etc.

4. What to do now for work that requires inspection?

- Submit a request for an electrical inspection for all projects as required by [WAC 296-46B-901](#)(9). If your installation is one of the following:
 - Essential installations described in Section 2. Be sure to tell us, using the Governor's directives how your project meets the exceptions for essential installations (be prepared to provide documentation). In the comments section of your request, tell us about any potential infection hazards or high-risk individuals present, and provide your contact information. For inspections in areas where there is a high-risk of contracting the virus, our Virtual Electrical Inspections (VEI) group as explained below is the best option.
 - Elective installations. Be sure to tell us about what you installed in the comment section of your request. Tell us how to contact you in the future there as well. By making your request, you have met your obligations. Do not conceal anything until it passes inspection. After the Governor lifts his Stay Home, Stay Healthy order, we can resume inspecting these types of installations.
 - Energized emergency repairs made by property owners (Potential fire/life safety hazards). Be sure to tell us about what you installed in the comment section of your request. Include this comment in your request: "Energized emergency repairs made by property owner." Tell us how to contact you directly there as well. By making your request, you have met your obligations. We will contact you and make inspection arrangements.
- Make an appointment with our Virtual Electrical Inspections (VEI) group <https://lni.wa.gov/licensing-permits/electrical/electrical-permits-fees-and-inspections/electrical-contractors-virtual-inspections> only if your installation qualifies for an essential inspection as outlined in Section 2 above.

Clearly indicate how/why your installation qualifies for inspection in the "What are we inspecting?" field of your appointment request. Virtual inspections are available only to licensed electrical contractors.

For the latest information from the Governor's office, visit <https://coronavirus.wa.gov/>.