

ELECTRICAL INSPECTION FOR LIVE PERFORMANCES AND EVENTS

Overview

This document provides an overview of electrical inspection in purpose-built theatres, theatre-style environments, and other live event venues only. Specifically, it speaks to calling for electrical inspection of production-related temporary electrical installations for live shows and events. The document does not discuss electrical inspection of permanent facility electrical installations that are not part of production activity.

Background

Electrical inspection in Ontario is conducted by the Electrical Safety Association (ESA), a not-for-profit entity established by the Ministry of Consumer Services. The ESA is the authority responsible for electrical safety in Ontario.

The Canadian Electrical Code, Part I (CEC, Pt. I) is the safety standard for electrical installations. As new editions of CEC, Pt. I are published they are adopted by provinces, with or without amendment, to become provincial regulations - in Ontario the Ontario Electrical Safety Code (OESC).

In Ontario SPEC-003, “Television, Film, Live Performance and Event Electrical Guidelines”, serves as an entertainment industry-specific supplement to the OESC. Where industry-specific installation aspects are not clear in the OESC, SPEC-003 should allow productions and venues to achieve equivalent safe production-related electrical installations using alternate methods.

The Entertainment Electrical Safety Committee of Ontario (EESCO) consists of groups and individuals concerned with the use and conditions of use of electricity and electrical equipment in the entertainment industry in Ontario.

Inspections

In the OESC, Rule 44-100 Travelling shows states:

“Electrical equipment used by a travelling theatrical company, circus or other travelling show, whether or not the performance is held within a theatre, shall not be used for the initial performance of any stand until a permit has been obtained from the inspection department.”

In this rule a “travelling show” is properly interpreted as a touring production, a touring show, or any type of live event.

As per SPEC-003, General Practices, 2.1 Application for Inspection Notification (Permits) – Electrical Inspection:

“All productions and events shall file an application for inspection with the ESA 48 hours prior to commencement of any electrical activity.”

Whenever single-pin connectors, portable power distribution (including portable dimmer racks, moving light distros, sound distros, motor distros), motorized effects, socapex-type cable, joy cable, stage-pin connectors, rented and/or borrowed cable and/or cords are used, a call for inspection and a permit are required.

Only when a show is produced in-house, in a venue:

1. that is classified as a Theatre under the Ontario Building Code, and
 2. that uses distribution permanently installed in metal to dimmers and from dimmers to receptacles, and
 3. that uses house-owned approved electrical equipment with connectors shown in CEC, Pt. I Diagram 1 or Diagram 2,
- is no electrical permit required.

Production electrical work may also be covered under a Continuous Safety Services (CSS) agreement set-up with the ESA. Specifics of each CSS agreement determine inspection frequency, production activity covered, and other conditions.

Inspection Application

Requests for inspection are relayed to the ESA on the “Entertainment Industry Application for Electrical Inspection” (Application for Inspection) form. This Application for Inspection form is available on the ESA’s website, esasafe.com.

On the Application for Inspection form three Certificates of Qualification are recognized: Trade 309A, Construction and Maintenance Electrician; Trade 269E, Entertainment Industry Power Technician; and, Licensed Electrical Contractor.

Further Information

ESA

www.esasafe.com

EESCO

www.eesco.ca