

Larimer County Electrical Permits/Inspection Service Proposal

State law allows counties to assume responsibility for electrical permitting and inspections from the Colorado Electrical Board. Because of the potential for offering more responsive and faster service than the state can provide given its budget and resource constraints, the Board of Larimer County Commissioners is leaning towards informing the state by October 1 that we will provide this service as of July 1, 2020.

Description of proposed service

Electrical permits/inspections will include work as part of residential, commercial and utility buildings (new, additions, alterations), solar photovoltaic installations, electric-only permits (service upgrades, temporary power poles), furnaces, ACs and water heaters, mobile home parks, fire alarms, electrical signs, oil/gas operations, and communications towers. The County will adopt the latest National Electrical Code, hire, equip and train new staff, determine electrical permit and inspection procedures, reprogram our permit processing system to include electrical, prepare educational handouts, and notify the public.

Larimer County will review electrical plans only for commercial installations, multi-family, single-family dwellings over a certain size/ampereage and solar PV permits. Electrical plan review will be done either by new inspectors or plan review staff with proper experience and training.

New staff will be hired to process permits and conduct inspections

In order to provide inspections within one business day instead of three in most of Larimer County, two full-time county electrical inspectors and another permit technician will be hired to provide the service. Per state law and to uphold public safety, our inspectors will be certified master or journeymen electricians. For greater efficiency, these inspectors may be trained to perform simpler building inspections such as ground mount and rooftop solar, and mechanical, gas and plumbing for furnaces, air conditioners and water heaters.

Third-party contract for extra help

Because two inspectors will usually but not always be enough, we will contract with either a master electrician or private inspection agency with staff master electricians to provide electrical inspections as needed on a contingency basis, such as when one of the inspectors is on leave, or during summer months of high activity.

Potential advantages to Larimer County customers, contractors and community members

- Customer service quality will increase. Property owners and contractors will not need to get separate electrical permits and coordinate between county and state agencies.
- Electrical inspections will generally occur the next business day instead of in three working days.
- It will be easier for county staff to track permits, inspections and final approvals in our own database.
- Code enforcement of electrical safety violations will be simplified and improved.
- Larimer County will have authority over setting/removing electrical meters in unincorporated areas.
- Coordination will improve on electrical installations required by other codes including exhaust fans, smoke detectors, exit signs and energy-efficient lighting.



Questions for customers, electrical contractors and community members

- 1) Do you generally support Larimer County taking on responsibility for electrical permitting and inspections, instead of the state of Colorado?
- 2) Do you agree electrical permits should be incorporated into existing permit processes for commercial, residential, utility and miscellaneous permits?
- 3) There are remote parts of the county where all building inspections currently occur only on Wednesdays and Fridays. With two full-time electrical inspectors, there may be other county areas where electrical inspections must occur within two business days, not one. Would performing most electrical inspections the next business day serve your needs?
- 4) Should the county review electrical plans for all permits? Should the county only review plans for certain types of electrical permits? If so, which ones?
- 5) Do you have any questions for us about this proposed service?
- 6) Do you have any other suggestions or comments as we decide whether to move forward and try to set up an electrical permit/inspection program?

Feel free to use additional sheets of paper as needed. If you would like a response to your questions or comments, please include your name and contact information.