

Leonard Inkster
Non-executive Secretary and Registrar
Ontario Association of Certified Home Inspectors
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May 26, 2017

Re: Home Inspectors taking the cover off a residential electrical panel

Dear: Mr. Inkster

I understand that you made an inquiry with respect to whether a home inspector can open the panel cover off a residential electrical panel when they are undertaking a home inspection. This includes whether this type of action could be interpreted within the scope of undertaking “electrical work”.

First, ESA’s mandate is to administer and enforce Part VIII of the Electricity Act and its associated Regulations on behalf of the Province of Ontario. To meet this mandate, ESA conducts such regular functions as inspections; licensing; public education; developing and upholding the Ontario Electrical Safety Code; and compliance and enforcement activities.

It is ESA’s opinion that a home inspector can take the cover off an electrical panel in order to undertake a visual review of the electrical equipment when conducting a home inspection. This action does not fall within the scope of the definition of electrical work under the Licensing of Electrical Contractors and Master Electricians regulation (O.Reg 570/05) as they would not be altering the electrical panel or performing electrical work. Therefore, a home inspector does not need to be a licensed electrical contractor under the Licensing Regulation. Nor does a home inspector need to pull an application for inspection (a permit) as per the Ontario Electrical Safety Code.

ESA wants to emphasize that home inspectors should take the necessary safety precautions when doing this by determining severity of potential exposure, planning safe work practices, and selecting personal protective equipment (PPE) to protect against shock and arc flash hazards.

Further, it is important to note that the Ontario Electrical Safety Code provides requirements for the protection of installations and persons under Rule 2-304 (Disconnection) which prohibits working on electrical equipment while it is energized unless it is not feasible.

ESA also recognizes that there may be a number of work practices and scope-of-work considerations that require further contemplation through the upcoming home inspection regime being created by the Ministry of Government and Consumer Services. Determining how the upcoming home inspection regime will interact with existing legislation (i.e. ESA, OCOT and MOL jurisdiction) will provide additional clarity on how the ESA and home inspectors can work cooperatively to ensure the safety for the people of Ontario.

We trust that this provides you with a satisfactory response to your inquiry. Should you have any further questions please do not hesitate to contact me

Regards,



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cc: Michèle Sanborn, Director, Policy and Governance Branch
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