April 17, 2020

Temporary Residential Facilities (TRF)

Introduction

Given the current situation with COVID-19, new measures have been introduced to allow governments and municipalities to repurpose existing facilities, or build temporary structures, such as tents, so communities can meet their local needs quickly.

The intent of this document is to address the repurposing of existing facilities and building of new temporary structures that are to be used as Temporary Residential Facilities (TRF). This document provides a deviation to the requirements of the Ontario Electrical Safety Code (OESC), while requiring the facilities to maintain an acceptable level of electrical safety.

For the purpose of this document, a TRF is a building or structure that is used or intended to be used to provide, on a temporary basis for the purpose of responding to the COVID-19 emergency, sleeping accommodation by or on behalf of a health service provider or a government (including a municipality).[1]

TRFs are not intended to be used for the delivery of health care and would not include patient care areas.[2]

For the purpose of this document, a competent person is defined under the Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA), and may be a licensed electrical contractor (LEC) and/or a professional engineer.

Establishing a TRF

By providing a deviation, as described herein, to the requirements of the OESC, Section 76 – "Temporary Wiring" shall be permitted to apply for new installations, or supplement existing wiring for the temporary use of establishments as TRFs. Examples of these establishments may include but are not limited to:

- Heated garage space (parking garages)

[1] This definition references and adopts the definition in O.Reg. 141/20 made under the *Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act*, except to the extent that definition refers to temporary health facilities. (https://www.ontario.ca/laws/regulation/200141)

[2] For the requirements to establish a temporary emergency health care facility (TEHCF), please refer to the document published at in the following link *https://esasafe.com/newsroom-2020/esa-response-to-novel-coronavirus-(covid-19)/*

- Exhibition places
- Large open manufacturing spaces
- Tents

It is recognized that different buildings will require differing levels, types and degrees of complexity of electrical work to be ready for the temporary purpose. An application for deviation is not required for establishing TRF following Section 76 requirements, provided all of the conditions below are met:

1. **Assessment**

   A competent person shall determine if the existing electrical infrastructure is adequate to support the electrical demand of the proposed TRF. This assessment shall include:
   a. Determination if existing service is adequate;
   b. The need for additional outlets (such as receptacles); and
   c. Whether temporary distribution is required.

   A sketch of electrical modifications and/or additions to the distribution system is required for discussion with the ESA local area inspector.

2. **Testing**

   Prior to occupation or use, a competent person shall review an existing facility for electrical hazards, and for all facilities perform basic testing such as:

   a. All receptacles located in accessible areas to occupants shall be tested for polarity and bonding;

   b. Metal Objects and electrical equipment shall be tested to ensure they are not inadvertently energized; and

   c. Ground Fault Circuit Interrupters (GFCIs) in areas within 1.5 meters of sinks or a wet environment shall be tested for proper operation.

3. **Installations and wiring methods**

   a. All electrical equipment and wiring shall be approved for the purpose.

   b. All electrical installations shall be performed by a person in accordance with the Ontario Regulation 570/05 – “LICENSING OF ELECTRICAL CONTRACTORS AND MASTER ELECTRICIANS”.

c. All electrical distribution equipment is recommended to be lockable or accessible only to authorized personal.

d. When additional feeders, branch circuits, or panel boards are required:
    i. They are permitted to be installed in accordance with the general requirements of the OESC including Section 76 – “Temporary Wiring”; and

    ii. Portable electrical distribution and power panels (similar to what is used by the entertainment or construction industry) are robust and well suited for this application.

e. Connection of temporary wiring to existing distribution systems is permitted, and shall not expose occupants to unsafe or energized portions of the electrical system. Temporary Wiring including flexible cords shall be suitable for the purpose and protected from mechanical damage and installed in such a manner that it will not create tripping hazards.

f. When needed, use of extension cords rated for extra-hard usage and wet locations are recommended. They are less susceptible to mechanical damage and can withstand wet environment conditions when cleaning or disinfecting. Use an appropriate cable size for the equipment connected. Where cords are used in areas subject to wet conditions, such as standing fluids, GFCI protection of the Class A type is required.

g. Electrical rooms shall be secured from unauthorized persons, and not used for storage.

h. The electrical installation and equipment shall be continually monitored for damage and shall be repaired replaced, or disconnected as soon as possible.

i. Outlets and receptacles shall be marked or labelled for new branch circuits’ overcurrent devices at the distribution panel and at the load.

Plan review and inspection for TRF

A notification of work is required as per Rule 2-004 for wiring a temporary structure or the conversion of an existing facility to TRF prior to occupancy. This can be obtained on a priority basis by calling ESA Customer Service Centre at 1-877-372-7233 (1-877-ESA-SAFE).

Plan review submittal will not be required for TRF at the present time.

Consultation or Additional Technical Advice

For consultation or additional technical advice, please contact your Local/Senior Inspector or Regional Technical Advisor.

Local/Senior Inspector can be found at - https://findaninspector.esasafe.com/ILT

Technical Advisors:

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