



*Superintendent of Central Inspection
Kurt Schroeder*

Signs prohibited on City rights-of-way.

Many contractors install small signs on the property where a job is in progress. The signs are utilized during the project, and are to be removed once the project is finished. Unfortunately, we are also finding many of these signs being placed on City rights-of-way and City properties as well.

Signs placed on City rights-of-way and properties are declared to be a public nuisance by Title 24, Sign Code and are illegal. Not only are they unsightly, they pose a hazard to motorists and pedestrians as well as utility crews. Signs placed on City rights-of-way are subject to confiscation, and the payment of a sign recovery fee for each sign that is impounded.

If you place small signs on a jobsite, please make certain they are not placed on the City rights-of-way. Not only will this make the city more aesthetically pleasing, but it will also reduce potential hazards. Additionally, proper placement of the signs will ensure that you avoid payment of sign recovery fees or the loss of your investment in the signs.

Thank you for your efforts to assist us in the maintenance of our city.

John R. Cox, Jr.
Interim Zoning/Sign/License Inspection Supervisor.

Building, Fire and Trade Code Review Updates

As of February 1, 2010, reviews of the 2009 International Building Code (IBC), 2009 International Residential Code (IRC), 2009 International Fire Code (IFC), 2009 International Mechanical Code (IMC) and 2009 International Fuel Gas Code (as related to mechanical/HVAC equipment/venting) were nearing completion. Since May/June 2009, the 2009 editions of these model codes have been reviewed by OCI/Wichita Fire Department staff in conjunction with stakeholder representatives from the Wichita Area Builders Association, the Association of General Contractors, the local American Institute of Architects, local structural engineers, the Mechanical Trades Advisory Council, other mechanical trade associations, the Wichita Board of Code Standards and Appeals (BCSA) and the Wichita Mechanical Board.

During the last quarter of 2009 and in early 2010, staff made presentations to the BCSA and the Mechanical Board outlining key changes between the 2006 and 2009 editions of the IBC, IRC and IMC/IFGC codes, as well as proposed local amendments to these 2009 code editions (per review committee and stakeholder input). The Mechanical Board has recommended City Council approval of a proposed ordinance to adopt the 2009 IMC/IFGC, with proposed local amendments. At its March 2010 meeting, the BCSA is scheduled to conduct another review and make final recommendations on adoption of the 2009 editions of the IBC, IFC and IRC, with proposed local amendments. It is anticipated that adopting ordinances will be presented to the City Council for review in April 2010.

The currently-proposed 2009 IRC adopting ordinance deletes the 2009 IRC requirement for fire sprinklers in new one and two-family dwellings. Although fire sprinkler requirements for three and four-family dwellings is not deleted per the currently proposed 2009 IRC amendments, the proposed amendments outline alternative fire-wall construction (between units) that could be used in lieu of required fire sprinklering in three and four family dwellings.

As a result of input from stakeholders, particularly home builders, new local “Deck Standards” for residential construction are being developed and finalized in conjunction with the proposed 2009 IRC adoption. Input from stakeholders, including stakeholder input on various 2009 code review committees, continues to be greatly appreciated, and has and will continue to be extremely valuable to OCI/City.

Reviews of the 2009 editions of the Uniform Plumbing Code (UPC) and International Plumbing Code (IPC) are just getting underway (the City of Wichita currently utilizes the 2000 UPC, with local amendments). In late 2009, the City Council directed staff and the Plumbing Board to review both 2009 codes before making a recommendation for a 2009 model Plumbing Code adoption.

As you are probably aware, the City’s Electrical Code, which adopts the National Electrical Code (NEC), is on a different three-year model code publication cycle than the other model codes (the City adopted the 2008 NEC, with local amendments, in late 2008).

Documents recently presented to the BCSA and Mechanical Board may be reviewed under “News and Notices” on the Office of Central Inspection Web site at <http://www.wichita.gov/CityOffices/OCI/>, or may be obtained from OCI by contacting Elaine Hammons at 268-4460.

Kurt Schroeder
Superintendent, Office of Central Inspection

Status of OCI "Special Revenue" Fund Budget

The OCI "Special Revenue Fund" (SRF) comprised nearly 90% of the total 2009 OCI expenditure budget, originally approved by City Council in August 2008 (the SRF comprised \$6,850,060 of OCI's \$7,743,476 total approved 2009 expenditure budget). Revenue to the OCI SRF (which supports approved OCI SRF expenditures) is derived from construction, remodeling and/or repair project plan review/permit fees, sign permit fees, contractor licensing fees, trade certificate fees, various business license fees (such as home occupations and drinking establishments) and various other code enforcement fees. Per City Council Resolution, user fees collected for OCI services may be credited only to the OCI SRF. Per the same Council Resolution, an OCI SRF fund "reserve" equal to 3-4 months of the approved annual OCI SRF expenditure budget should be maintained.

Like most businesses, including building and remodeling/repair contractors, OCI faced an extremely challenging revenue year during 2009. This was due primarily to the severe and extended national/global economic recession and to a substantial downturn in construction permit activity. Between September 2008 and June 2009, the OCI SRF saw an unprecedented revenue decline. During this period, the SRF reserve dropped from a 4.1 month reserve level (\$2.15 million) to a 1.0 month level (\$576,637).

To avoid a negative OCI SRF balance by year-end 2009 (and into 2010), OCI prepared a significantly reduced and revised 2009 and 2010 OCI SRF budget for City Manager and City Council approval. Utilizing a combination of significant OCI SRF expenditure reductions, American Resource Recovery Act funding and Community Development Block Grant funding (to support Neighborhood Inspection activities by temporarily shifting certain construction personnel to increased/new neighborhood code enforcement activities), the revised 2009 OCI SRF expenditure budget was ultimately reduced by nearly 19% (from \$6,850,060 to \$5,553,113). Previously adopted revenue projections for the 2009 OCI SRF budget were reduced by about 34% (from \$6,720,370 to \$4,399,005). Even with the revised 2009 budget, the OCI SRF reserve was projected to be well under \$200,000 by the end of 2009 (0.3 months of budgeted expenditures).

As of 12/31/09, the OCI SRF fund was balanced, and the SRF reserve stood at over \$500,000 (about a one-month reserve level) of budgeted 2009 expenditures. The revised and approved 2010 OCI expenditure budget has also been dramatically reduced. OCI will continue to closely monitor construction plan review and permit activity, OCI SRF revenues and OCI SRF expenditures in order to maintain a balanced OCI SRF budget (while maintaining adequate customer service delivery).

Maria Bias
Administrative Services Division Supervisor



REMINDER

Alarm, Electrical, Elevator, HVAC, Plumbing and all other certificates must be renewed by February 28th to prevent penalties. Certificate holders that have not taken the Block & Associates, Exporior, ICC or Prometric test will have to retest if not renewed by February 28, 2010.

Electrical Permit Required?

What electrical work requires a permit and what electrical work is a maintenance person allowed to do?

Let's start with what the City ordinance states. Title 19, of the City ordinance, Section 19.08.005 states: "It is unlawful for any person to engage in the business of the installation of electric wiring or of the installation of electrical equipment, devices or apparatus for light, heat, or power purposes in or on any building or premises within the city without having secured an electrical license from the superintendent of central inspection" and Section 19.08.010 states: "It is further unlawful for any person to engage in the trade or otherwise perform the act of installing electrical wiring or raceways for equipment, apparatus or devices for light, heat or power, or other purposes within or on any building or premises within the city without first having secured a master electrician's certificate or a journeyman electrician's certificate as herein provided for and both be in the employ of a licensed electrical contractor. A holder of a residential wireman electrician's certificate may perform the act of installing any and all electrical wiring within or on one- and two-family dwellings only and must be in the employ of a licensed electrical contractor".

The exception to this requirement is an owner-occupant of a detached single-family dwelling may obtain a permit for any electrical installations on the load side of the service panelboard in the main structure and the usual accessory buildings thereto upon fulfillment of the exam and plan review requirements. The owner obtaining said permit shall personally purchase all materials and shall personally perform all labor in connection with the permitted project. The owner shall call for all inspections and otherwise observe all the applicable provisions of this title. Permits for electrical installations shall be limited to one in three years to each applicant.

Permit requirements and fees are listed in Section 19.08.150 and it states in part: "It is unlawful for any person to do or cause to be done any electrical wiring for light, heat or power within any building or on any premises in the city without first obtaining a permit from the office of central inspection".

So with that being said, let's start with answering the first part of the question, what electrical work requires a permit. The following is an example of what would require a permit:

- Replacement or addition of any wires or raceways.
- Installation or addition of any direct connected electrical equipment, apparatus, fixtures, receptacles or devices.
- Replacement of electric panels, panelboards or disconnects.
- Replacement of breakers larger than 60 amperes.
- Installation or replacement of metering device enclosures.
- Retrofitting a fixture to accept a different ballast or lamp than what was approved in the fixture at the time the fixture as manufactured.
- Installation or replacement of generating equipment, not owned by a utility company. This includes fuel, wind, solar, etc. generators.

The following is an example of work that does not require a permit:

- Installation or replacement of lamps or ballasts, except when retrofitting a fixture to accept a different lamp or ballast than what was approved at the time the fixture was manufactured. (Example: Replace a class P ballast with an electronic ballast or redo fixture to accept T8 lamps instead of T12 lamps.)

cont. on next page

Electrical Permit Required? cont.

- Installation or replacement of electric utilization equipment approved for connection to suitable permanently installed receptacles.
- Replacement of snap switches (normal light switch), lamp sockets, and receptacles.
- Replacement of fuses only when they are disconnected from power when the disconnect switch is in the off position.
- Replacement of breakers rated zero through sixty amps only when the breaker is not used as a service disconnect nor does it require the utility power to be disconnected in order to replace the breaker.
- Other minor maintenance and repair work, such as replacing worn cords and tightening connections on a wiring device.
- The process of manufacturing, testing, servicing, or repairing electric equipment or apparatus.

If you are replacing electrical equipment or devices note that the ordinance requires that any wiring, equipment, apparatus or devices that are replaced or rewired shall meet the latest adopted edition of the National Electrical Code.

Also, the ordinance does not allow for just anyone to do the work. Most of the time, the worker would be required to have an electrical journeyman or master certificate and be employed by a licensed electrical contractor.

So what is a maintenance person allowed to do when that person does not have any electrical certificate or they have a journeyman certificate but they are not employed by an electrical contractor hired to do the work? The following outlines what electrical work a maintenance person is allowed:

- Installation or replacement of lamps.
- Installation or replacement of electric utilization equipment approved for connection to suitable permanently installed receptacles.
- Replacement of snap switches (normal light switch), lamp sockets, and receptacles.
- Replacement of a light fixture inside a dwelling unit or multifamily building.
- Replacement of fuses only when they are disconnected from power when the disconnect switch is in the off position.
- Other minor maintenance and repair work, such as replacing worn cords and tightening connections on a wiring device.
- Servicing or repairing an electric appliance.

If you would like your maintenance person to do electrical work other than what is listed, you will need to employ a master electrician. Section 19.08.140 of the City ordinance states: “Any person not engaged in the business of electrical installation, within the scope of this code, who has in his regular and permanent employ a person or persons who possess current and valid master electrician certificates, shall be permitted to have such person or persons install electrical wiring or otherwise perform electrical work in or on buildings or premises that are owned, leased, operated or managed by him. This shall not be construed, however, to allow the installation of electrical wiring in new buildings or to additions to existing buildings. Permits shall be obtained for such work as required in Section 19.08.150 of this code, and the same shall be issued to the person causing the work to be done.”

If you have questions about this please contact Tom Kerschen, 268-4465.

OCI Technology Update

In May 2009, the Wichita City Council authorized execution of a contract with Infor Global Solutions (Infor/Hansen 8) to replace and upgrade the City's current land-use case management/tracking, construction plan review and permitting, contractor licensing and code enforcement case management software systems. The current software system – *Tidemark* – is well over 10 years old, and supports multiple City department in-house users and hundreds of public users (primarily licensed contractors) via "E-Permits." Although *Tidemark* has worked well — automating many processes, improving case tracking and enhancing communications (between departments and with the public) — the system's 12+ year old architectural platform will simply not support many new web-based and/or Internet technologies and services, *many of which can dramatically improve citizen access, "e-commerce" capacity, ease of use, wireless capabilities, and general information flow and communication.*

Industry representatives, including the Wichita Area Builders Association (WABA), supported use of OCI contingency/reserve funds to pay for about 40% of the overall \$945,000 project (the remaining 60% is funded by the City's Information Technology Equipment Replacement Fund, which is supported by multiple departments through department user fees). WABA/other builder representatives participated in vendor and software product reviews (eight vendors participated in a highly competitive RFP and vendor selection process between October 2008 and April 2009).

Infor had its Wichita project kick-off in early July 2009. An approximate 16-month project design, prototyping, build-out, testing, data-conversion (from Tidemark) and implementation schedule has been developed, with a Infor/Hansen 8 "go-live" projected for early 2011. As of early February 2010, the project is about 3-4 weeks behind the initial schedule.

The City is looking forward to development and implementation of the new system, and will work with contractors and other citizen users to design an improved and more "user friendly" system. We believe this project will greatly enhance communication and information flow among departments and with contractors and the general public, will increase/enhance customer service options, and will generally improve overall customer service.

Kurt Schroeder
Superintendent, Office of Central Inspection



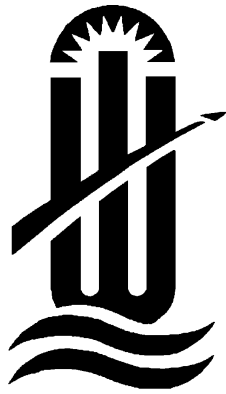
Building Standards now Available on WEB

Three City of Wichita standards are now available on the O.C.I. website, these standards are:

- 1) Bracing of wall sections, standard
- 2) Non vehicular storage structures anchoring, standards
- 3) Basement standards for one and two family dwellings, standards

To view the standards go to http://wichita.gov/CityOffices/OCI/building_inspection.htm

Darlene Hultman
Administrator, Building Inspection



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WICHITA

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