

# Bulletin

Planning & Development Services

580 First Street SE  
Medicine Hat, Alberta T1A 8E6

Phone: 403.529.8374

Fax: 403.502.8038

[pbe@medicinehat.ca](mailto:pbe@medicinehat.ca)

[www.medicinehat.ca](http://www.medicinehat.ca)

June 7 2018

## SAFETY CODES SERVICES BULLETIN

### INSTALLATION OF SOLAR PANEL SYSTEMS

Safety Codes Services has recently become aware of illegal solar panel systems being installed within the City of Medicine Hat by property owners. The systems typically involve 12-volt RV type solar panels purchased locally and connected to residential dwelling electrical systems via an AC inverter. These installations are being identified as “unsafe conditions” as they could energize City utility lines with deadly results to any employee working in the system outside of the dwelling.

The *Alberta Safety Codes Act* and Alberta Permit Regulation 204/2007 regulate all construction Codes within the Province of Alberta and outlines what types of permits are required for any alteration or addition to a building or building system. A permit in the Electrical discipline is required to install, alter, or add to an electrical system. A permit in the Building discipline is required for the construction of a building, including the renovations or addition to a building.

The installation of a solar panel system that is connected to an electrical system regulated by the *Alberta Safety Codes Act* may only be completed once an Electrical permit is issued. If the solar panel array is to be installed on the roof of an existing building, a Building permit is required. Each permit is required to ensure that the installation of the system complies with the applicable construction Codes.

The *Alberta Safety Codes Act* identifies an Owners’ responsibility in regards to anything regulated by the *Act*.

#### Owners, care and control

**5** The owner of any thing, process or activity to which this Act applies shall ensure that it meets the requirements of this Act, that the thing is maintained as required by the regulations and that when the process or activity is undertaken it is done in a safe manner.

1991 cS-0.5 s5

Where an Owner is found to have created an “unsafe condition”, the owner shall take immediate action to remove the “unsafe condition”. This means, if it is found that an Owner has created an “unsafe condition” and refuses to take immediate action to remedy the situation, a Safety Codes Officer can take immediate action to remove the “unsafe condition”. The *Alberta Safety Codes Act* grants a Safety Codes Officer the following authority to deal with an “unsafe condition”:



Medicine Hat  
The Gas City

### Emergency

**47(1)** If a safety codes officer is, on reasonable and probable grounds, of the opinion that there is an imminent serious danger to persons or property because of any thing, process or activity to which this Act applies or because of a fire hazard or risk of an explosion, the officer may take any action that the officer considers necessary to remove or reduce the danger.

**(2)** An action taken under subsection (1) may include ordering the evacuation of persons from the affected premises and disconnecting or requiring the disconnection of an electrical, gas, sewage or plumbing system.

Although solar panel systems are encouraged as beneficial to a home owner and are promoted as green energy that helps reduce the greenhouse emissions, when installed incorrectly they can endanger the lives of the occupants of the dwelling as well as linemen working for the utility if the system is not designed to disconnect during a loss of power to the building.

If you have installed or are aware of an installation of a solar panel system that may have been installed without the required permits or inspections, you are encouraged to call Planning & Development Services at 403-529-8374 or the Electrical Utility department at 403-529-8262 and file a report.



Elgin Mann Jr.,  
Manager of Safety Codes Services  
Planning & Development Services  
City of Medicine Hat

