

Filming in Minnesota

An outline of electrical safety requirements

This document contains important information regarding electrical licensing, electrical inspection, and the requirements of the National Electrical Code (NEC) for filmmaking and similar projects that employ portable, vehicle-mounted, or temporary electrical power distribution.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is the responsibility of the Department of Labor and Industry?

In accordance with Minnesota law and rules, the department has the responsibility for inspection of all electrical wiring and equipment for on-location filming, filmmaking productions and similar projects. Portable and vehicle-mounted generators and portable or temporary electrical distribution systems are required to be inspected. Additions or alterations to premises wiring systems, permanent electrical infrastructure or other fixed wiring systems are also required to be separately inspected. Equipment must be inspected and be in compliance before it is energized and put into use.

2. What is the responsibility of the film production company or its authorized representative?

The film production company or its authorized representative is responsible for notifying the department sufficiently in advance to permit completion of all required electrical inspections, the correction of code violations and the required reinspections.

3. Is inspection of equipment necessary before the electrical system can be energized or used?

Electrical equipment must not be energized until it has been inspected and approved.

4. Does the Department of Labor and Industry perform electrical inspections in all areas of the state?

The department's inspectors make electrical inspections statewide, except in cities that have made provisions for electrical inspections within their respective local jurisdictions. A list of all state and local electrical inspectors is available on the department's website at <http://www.dli.mn.gov/business/electrical-contractors/electrical-inspector-directories>. Upon request and to promote consistency, the department will provide consultation to local or municipal electrical inspectors for filmmaking productions.

5. How do I request and schedule an electrical inspection?

The Request for Electrical Inspection (REI) form will be completed and the appropriate inspection fee will be collected at the time of the electrical inspection. The Department of Labor and Industry does not accept cash as payment for inspections. Accepted methods of payment are checks or money orders. Electrical inspections can be scheduled by contacting the department at dli.electricity@state.mn.us or by calling the Chief Electrical Inspector, Dean Hunter, at 651-284-5314.

6. Is an electrical inspection required at each different location where filming will take place?

An initial comprehensive electrical inspection is required at the first filming location. In cooperation with the film production company, random electrical inspections at no additional cost will be made at subsequent filming locations to ensure electrical safety.

7. What if there are code violations at the time of the initial electrical inspection?

Identified code violations are documented on an inspection report form and a copy is provided to the user of the equipment. A reasonable period of time will be allowed to bring the equipment into compliance. Equipment must be in compliance before it is energized and put into use.

8. Are there restrictions in Minnesota as to who can perform electrical work?

Minnesota has strict electrical licensing and electrical inspection requirements. Persons other than licensed employees of licensed electrical contractors are only allowed to connect or inter-connect multi-conductor cords and single-conductor cables that are equipped with approved separable multi-pole or single-pole connectors. Licensed employees of licensed electrical contractors are required to connect or terminate cords and cables that have bare ends, clamps, clips or other types of connections other than approved separable connectors.

Licensed employees of licensed electrical contractors are required to perform all electrical work on interior or exterior premises wiring systems or any other permanent or fixed electrical infrastructure, regardless if it will be dismantled, abandoned or removed at the conclusion of filming. Electrical inspections associated with premises wiring systems or other permanent or fixed electrical infrastructure are conducted separately (the licensed electrical contractor will file a separate Request for Electrical Inspection form and inspection fee).

9. How is the electrical equipment marked to indicate that it has passed inspection?

In addition to public copies of electrical permits, inspection reports or other documentation, an electrical inspection sticker is typically affixed to the generator enclosure or other equipment enclosures, as applicable. However, for rented or leased equipment on which an inspection sticker would not be acceptable or allowed by the equipment owner, alternative documentation will be provided.

10. How much does an electrical inspection cost?

In accordance with Minnesota Statute 326B.37, Subd. 10, an electrical inspection for a filmmaking project will be considered as a “Special Inspection”. The inspection fee is \$80 per hour, including travel time, plus the standard mileage rate. The time necessary to make a comprehensive initial electrical inspection will be different for each filming project. However, based on past experience, most initial electrical inspections can be made in one to three hours. Every effort is made to provide a timely, thorough and professional inspection and to keep inspection costs at very reasonable levels.

Electrical Code Requirements

Minnesota adopts the most recent edition of the National Electrical Code (NEC). The scope and scale of electrical inspections for any filmmaking production will vary greatly depending on many variables associated with the production. Electrical inspections could include, but not be limited to, the following:

- Electrical services, generators, feeders and branch circuits
- Electrical system grounding, electrical equipment grounding, and generating equipment
- Flexible cords, flexible stage and lighting power cables, and other permanent or temporary wiring
- Ampacity ratings and overcurrent protection for cords, cables, wiring and equipment
- Portable power switchboards, power distribution boxes, scatter boxes, etc.
- Lighting equipment
- Receptacles and ground-fault circuit interrupter protection (GFCI) (if required)
- Audio signal processing, amplification and reproduction equipment
- Portable or permanent stage or set wiring
- Other electrical system wiring, equipment or components as necessary