

Seattle Permits

— part of a multi-departmental City of Seattle series on getting a permit

Electric Utility Clearance Requirements

November 16, 2005

The Seattle City Light (SCL) Overhead Power Distribution System requires a minimum horizontal and vertical clearance from buildings and structures, and other installations including signs, billboards, chimneys, radio and television antennas, and tanks. Required clearances allow for safe and legal operation of the system. It is important to note that whenever possible, SCL crews maintain and operate the Overhead Power Distribution System while energized to achieve the highest level of system reliability and customer satisfaction.

The purpose of required clearances is to keep the general public and workers without high voltage electrical expertise out of harm's way. Clearances also provide adequate space for qualified electrical workers to operate safely and efficiently during construction and long-term operations and maintenance activity. Additional clearances are required to allow for regular building maintenance such as window-washing activities.

Land use setback requirements alone, particularly when front setbacks of less than 15 feet are allowed, are likely not adequate to account for required clearances from overhead electric utilities. Note that clearances are also required where electrical facilities are located in alleys. Proposed buildings may need to be located back from property lines to accomplish required clearances. The illustration and guidelines on pages 2-3 of this Tip provide some additional general information.

Please contact SCL to arrange a meeting as early as possible in your design process. We recognize that each proposed development location, adjacent utilities, streetscape and development request is unique. Even if poles and wires are not immediately adjacent to your property at this time, it is best to as-

sume clearances are needed until you meet with SCL and verify otherwise. The city is growing and additional and relocated infrastructure is needed to serve this demand.

SCL and the Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections staff will work closely with you to accomplish appropriate clearances required during construction and at final build-out. Communication and resolution of required clearances are critical to final design and construction approval of your proposal.

Contacts

Seattle City Light North Electrical Services

(North of Denny Way)
North Customer Engineering
1300 N. 97th St.
(206) 615-0600

Seattle City Light South Electrical Services

(South of Denny Way)
South Customer Engineering
3613 - 4th Ave. S.
(206) 386-4200

More information on electric utility clearance requirements is available on the web at: www.seattle.gov/transportation/rowmanual/manual/4_20.asp.

NOTE: You must meet with SCL before construction of a project begins to ensure adherence to electric utility clearance requirements. This Tip should not be used as a substitute for codes and regulations, or in place of meeting with SCL. The applicant/developer is responsible for compliance with all code and rule requirements, whether or not described in this Tip.



Illustration Guidelines

Refer to the illustration on page 2.

- Clearance requirements will be based on the most restrictive elements within current Washington Administrative Code (WAC), including but not limited to WAC 296-155-428/WAC 296-24-960; National Electric Safety Code (NESC), including but not limited to Rules 236/237; and SCL requirements, including but not limited to Construction Guide-line D2-3.
- The illustration only represents a minimum clearance that accommodates the Overhead Power Distribution System. Routine maintenance and operation on the surface of a building or structure (e.g., painting, resurfacing and window washing) will likely require increased clearances. Otherwise the property owner will have to request that SCL temporarily relocate the Overhead Power Distribution System at the owner's cost per occurrence and subject to SCL approval. The permit applicants/developers are to consult SCL regarding additional maintenance and operations-based clearance requirements.
- The illustration is for finished building or structure clearances only, and clearances may be required on each side of the street to provide clearances for present and possible future SCL Overhead Power Distribution System installation and construction. SCL needs the ability to construct the Overhead Power Distribution System on both sides of the street to accommodate emergencies, construction clearances and future system additions and requirements. Wing-Arm Construction is to be used only to provide clearance for temporary construction and maintenance clearances where applicable, and not for finished building or structure clearances.
- If the developer intends to construct beneath the clearance zone, then additional vertical clearances are required. It is possible that construction beneath the clearance zone may be prohibited. Developers are to contact SCL as soon as possible.
- The illustration does not indicate the requirements for voltages over 50kV, nor for 115kV or 230kV transmission lines. Developers are to contact SCL for details regarding increased clearance requirements from these facilities and to determine voltage.
- Developers are to contact SCL for clearance requirements where SCL electrical infrastructure is located in alleys.

- Developers are to contact SDOT Street Use immediately if proposed construction includes appurtenances such as awnings over sidewalk areas or any proposed changes to curb lines.
- Developers are to contact SCL if vegetation is to be planted under or adjacent to clearance zones.
- If anyone identifies an existing or future condition that poses a possible electric clearance concern, please contact SCL immediately.

Access to Information

Links to electronic versions of Seattle DCI **Tips** and **Director's Rules** are available on the "Tools & Resources" page of our website at www.seattle.gov/dpd/toolsresources/. Paper copies of these documents, as well as additional regulations mentioned in this Tip, are available from our Public Resource Center, located on the 20th floor of Seattle Municipal Tower at 700 Fifth Ave. in downtown Seattle, (206) 684-8467.