

**Installing or upgrading
an electric service?
Contact your county's
building department
first**

Calhoun County
Building Department
(850)674-8046
425 East Central Ave.
Room 309
Blountstown

Holmes County
Building Department
(850)547-1110
201 Oklahoma Ave.
(Basement)
Bonifay

Jackson County
Building Department
(850)482-9805
4487 Lafayette St.
(Old Ag Center)
Marianna

Washington County
Building Department
(850)638-6195
1331 South Blvd.
ChIPLEY

Permit, please

*Get through the red tape involved in
installing or upgrading your service*

You might think that, whenever you want electric service installed or upgraded, you need only to contact West Florida Electric Cooperative, and a crew will come out and start stringing lines. But the process isn't quite that simple.

Here they come – those dreaded words – “First you’re going to need a permit.” In fact, WFEC can’t begin any of the work, can’t set a pole or a meter, to build or upgrade your electric service until you’ve obtained permission from the county building department. However, the following pointers will help guide you through the red tape so WFEC can promptly fulfill your request.

If you’re installing or upgrading any type of electric service whatsoever, contact your county’s building department before doing anything else. “I have to do an inspection on everything,” says Holmes County’s building inspector, James Merchant. “If it’s a service pole for a mobile home, a storage building, a well, a pump or an electric fence; upgrade of service on an existing home or from a temporary to a permanent structure; or new construction for a house, I have to inspect it.”

Permitting requirements vary from county to county. Check with your county’s building department to find out what, if any, exceptions are allowed. For instance, Merchant says, “It’s okay to put up a meter pole while construction is going on. You can have temporary power to work by as long as you have a building permit for the construction of a new home.” He adds, “I also don’t make any electrical inspections on commercial chicken houses so, in case of an emergency, such as the loss of power on a weekend, power can be restored without having to wait on an inspection.”

Merchant requires permit applicants to sign an affidavit verifying that the service being permitted will, in fact, serve what it’s supposed to. “That’s for the safety and welfare of our people,” he explains. “Sometimes people will try to add a mobile home where they had service to a pump, and they won’t have a septic tank permit.”

When you apply for a permit, be sure to provide a correct physical address and good directions so the inspector can find the location where the service is to be installed or upgraded. “The inspector also needs to have access into the house, if it’s new, to check the panel box inside to make sure it’s compatible with the service outside,” Jackson County Building Official Roy Coker says.

Once you’ve submitted your permit application, the inspector usually visits the service site within 24 hours, sometimes sooner. “We always give priority for an emergency,”

June 2000

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Coker says. “If a line is knocked down, for example, it must be inspected before power can be restored.” As soon as you’ve made arrangements for an inspection, contact WFEC to ensure your service order is on file and ready to fill upon notification from the county building department.

If your permit is approved, the inspector will place a sticker on the meter base and the building department will notify WFEC that your service has been approved. However, if the service doesn’t pass muster, the department will either contact you or leave a copy of the inspection report on or near the meter base so you can correct the problems and reschedule an inspection. You might have to pay an additional fee for a reinspection.



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