

**CITY OF RIVERSIDE
BUILDING & SAFETY DIVISION
INSPECTION PROCEDURE**

DATE: November 21, 2012

SUBJECT: E-Inspection Program (Photographs)

BACKGROUND:

Building Inspectors are required to inspect construction work performed under a variety of different types of building permits. Some of these permits represent relatively minor types of construction work, such as with a water heater replacement in a single family dwelling. This procedure has been developed in an effort to create new operational efficiencies for the City, provide greater convenience for the home owner and contractor, and to embrace a “Green” philosophy by reducing our carbon footprint through a reduction of motor vehicle usage by all parties (contractors, home owners, and City staff). Through this new program, Building Inspectors will perform their inspections from a computer terminal at their desk in City Hall, home owners will not need to take time off of work to be present for the traditional Building Inspector visit to the home for a water heater replacement or similar type of permit, and the contractor can avoid the need to schedule a Building Inspector site inspection or be at the site during that inspection. This new program will allow the contractor to use photographs to document code compliance of minor construction projects as identified by the Building Official.

CONTRACTOR PARTICIPATION IN THE PROGRAM

Prior to participation in the program, the contractor will meet with the Building Official to discuss the limitations and operational requirements of the program. Contractors will be required to demonstrate specific knowledge concerning the code requirements of the type of work to be performed under the E-Inspection program. Contractors will be required to demonstrate their ability to take clear photographs showing the specific features requested by the Building Official. Participating contractors may have their privilege to participate in this program revoked by the Building Official for; 1) Providing fraudulent or inaccurate information, 2) If their participation in the program is not proving to be an efficient use of City resources due to poor photo quality, 3) If the photos illustrate continuing installation problems resulting in repeated corrections needed, or 4) For any other reason that the Building Official deems appropriate and justified.

THE PERMIT

Residential water heater replacement permits issued under this program will be identical to residential water heater replacement permits issued under the traditional program. There will be no difference in the applicable fees between permits issued under this program or permits issued under the traditional program. Since this program does not allow switching from gas-fired to electric type water heaters (or visa-versa), it will be necessary to include such info in the description (i.e. Replacement of an original gas-fired water heater with a new gas-fired water heater” or

“Replacement of an original electric water heater with a new electric water heater”. It is assumed that the appropriate valuation for water heater replacements under the limitations of this program will typically fall within a range of \$500 - \$1,000.

VERIFICATION FORM

Verification forms, specific to the type of work performed, will be provided by the Building and Safety Division to the contractor. These forms will be required to be completed and signed by the contractor after the self-verification process is completed. The Verification forms contain complete directions on what photographs are to be taken and to which E-mail address they are to be sent.

PHOTOGRAPHS

Photos are to be E-mailed to the appropriate address as identified on the Verification form (Einspection@riversideca.gov). Photos must be of sufficient quality to clearly show compliance with applicable codes. The subject of the photo must show the particular feature identified on the Verification form. Some smart phones may not provide sufficient photo quality to satisfy the needs of the program. Therefore, it may be necessary to utilize a higher quality digital camera for the verification photos.

TYPES OF PERMITS

This program is limited to certain types of residential water heater replacements. This program is limited to replacements of the same type water heater (i.e. new electrical water heater replacing an original electrical water heater or a new gas-fired water heater replacing an original gas-fired water heater). Replacements of an original electric water heater with a new gas-fired water heater or an original gas-fired water heater with a new electric water heater are not allowed to participate in this program and must be inspected in the traditional site visit by the City Building Inspector. The Building Official will expand or eliminate this E-inspection program as experience with the program evolves and as appropriate. The initial program will cover residential water heater replacement permits as described in this document.

BUILDING INSPECTOR PHOTO INSPECTION AND PERMIT APPROVAL/DENIAL

An assigned Building Inspector will access the E-mail account (Einspection@riversideca.gov) each work day to perform a visual inspection of the photographs submitted by contractors. After performing the visual inspection of the photographs and reviewing the Building permit associated with the E-mail photos, the Building Inspector will send an E-mail reply to the contractor and indicate whether the permit is to be Finalled or if there are corrections needed or additional photos to show specific features more clearly. The Building Inspector will note on the City’s Permit copy what corrections (if any) are needed or sign-off the permit as Finalled if all is acceptable. This approval or corrections required protocol will be required on both the City’s paper copy of the permit as well on the City’s electronic version of the permit in the Acella permit system on the Inspection screen. The contractor’s proof of Final Inspection Approval will be the E-mail reply from the Building Inspector stating such (which will be in lieu of a signature on the job card). The photos will be copied and archived to the Acella database (Office Link tab) under the appropriate permit number by the reviewing Building Inspector.

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