

VANCOUVER ELECTRICAL REPAIR

Strata & Condo

Council approvals, alteration agreements, in-suite panels, parkade EV charging and leaky-condo era wiring in Metro Vancouver stratas

4 Expert Answers from Electric IQ

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Does an induction range in a Metrotown unit need a building load calculation?

A load calculation is almost certainly needed, and in many Metrotown high-rise suites it will reveal that the in-suite panel cannot support an induction range without changes upstream. That finding shapes the entire project cost, so it is worth understanding before you talk to an electrician or your strata council.

Why the load calculation matters here

Most Metrotown high-rise suites built in the 1970s through 1990s have 60A or 100A in-suite panels fed from a common electrical room on each floor. Those panels were sized for the loads of the era: baseboard heat, lighting, a refrigerator and a few small appliances. A standard 240V induction range draws 40A to 50A on a dedicated circuit, which can represent half or more of the entire in-suite service capacity. Before any electrician pulls wire, a licensed contractor needs to do a load calculation under the BC Electrical Code to confirm the in-suite panel, the floor distribution panel and the building's main service can absorb the new demand without overloading existing circuits.

If the in-suite panel is already near capacity, the options are a panel upgrade inside the suite (if the electrical room feed allows it), load management (pairing the range circuit with a demand controller that sheds other loads like baseboard heat when the range is running), or, in some buildings, a formal building electrical study that the strata commissions. Newer Metrotown towers, particularly those built after 2000 with 200A suite panels, are more likely to have headroom, but you still need the calculation to confirm it.

The strata layer adds a step that surprises many owners. In-wall wiring and the risers feeding your suite are almost always common property under the Strata Property Act. Installing a new 40A or 50A dedicated circuit for an induction range means running wire through or connecting to common property, which requires strata council approval and typically a signed alteration agreement before work begins. Some stratas also require an electrical planning report, especially if multiple owners are making similar upgrades. Starting without approval can result in the strata ordering the work removed at your cost.

For the electrical work itself, a dedicated 40A or 50A, 240V circuit in a Metro Vancouver high-rise typically costs \$800 to \$2,000 for a straightforward in-suite run. If the in-suite panel needs replacement or the electrical room feed needs upgrading, add \$1,800 to \$4,000 or more depending on what the building's infrastructure allows. Permit and inspection for this work in Burnaby (which covers most of Metrotown) goes through the City of Burnaby, which runs its own electrical permit and inspection program rather than using Technical Safety BC.

When you get quotes, ask each electrician whether the load calculation is included, whether they will handle the Technical Safety BC permit, and whether they have experience coordinating with strata councils and building managers. Confirm their Technical Safety BC licence number and WorkSafeBC coverage before signing anything.

Want quotes for this? Vancouver Electrical Repair can match you with local electricians who are familiar with Metrotown strata work, for free.

Q2

Do I sign an alteration agreement for electrical work in a Burnaby strata?

Burnaby strata electrical work almost always requires a strata council alteration agreement before work begins, and the permit comes from the City of Burnaby's own electrical inspection program, not Technical Safety BC.

Why an Alteration Agreement Is Standard for Strata Electrical Work

The Strata Property Act treats in-wall wiring, electrical panels in common electrical rooms, parkade wiring and anything outside your suite's interior air space as common property. Even work that feels entirely "inside your unit" often touches common property the moment a wire runs through a wall, ceiling or floor assembly. Because the strata corporation is responsible for common property, council needs to authorise the work and protect itself if something goes wrong later. That authorisation typically takes the form of a written alteration agreement.

What the agreement usually covers: who pays for the work, who is responsible if the work causes damage to a neighbouring suite or common area, whether the owner must restore the original condition on sale, and proof of insurance from the licensed contractor doing the job. Some strata corporations have a standard form; others draft one per project. Either way, get council approval in writing before you book an electrician.

Do not start work without that approval. A strata can order you to restore altered common property at your own expense, and an unpermitted alteration can complicate your sale or your strata insurance claim.

The scope of work determines how involved the process gets. Swapping a light fixture inside your suite on an existing box is usually owner-controlled and may not need an agreement at all. Adding a dedicated circuit, installing a Level 2 EV charger in the parkade, upgrading your in-suite panel or running new wiring through walls are all jobs that will trigger the alteration agreement process and almost certainly require a permit.

On the permit side, Burnaby runs its own electrical permit and inspection program through the City of Burnaby, separate from Technical Safety BC. Your electrician will pull the permit through the City, not through Technical Safety BC's online portal. The permit fee is typically included in a contractor's quote and runs in the \$100 to \$300 range for most residential strata jobs.

For EV charging in a Burnaby strata parkade, the process is more involved: the strata usually needs an electrical planning report, a load management strategy and per-stall metering before individual owners can proceed.

CleanBC's Go Electric Strata program offers funding for that planning work and for the installation itself, but the application generally needs to come from the strata corporation, not an individual owner. Apply before work starts, as most CleanBC rebates are not retroactive.

Before hiring anyone, ask the electrician for their Technical Safety BC licence number and confirm it yourself on the Technical Safety BC public registry. Also confirm WorkSafeBC coverage. A Burnaby strata job that involves common property or the parkade will also need the contractor to carry commercial general liability insurance, which your alteration agreement will likely specify.

Want quotes for this work? Vancouver Electrical Repair can match you with local electricians for free.

Q3

Who owns the wiring inside the walls of a Metrotown condo?

In a BC strata, the wiring inside the walls is almost always common property, not the unit owner's property. That single fact has big practical consequences: you generally cannot hire an electrician to open a wall and run new wiring in your suite without strata council approval first, and the strata corporation is responsible for maintaining that wiring under the Strata Property Act.

What the Strata Property Act actually says

The Act defines common property as everything that is not within the boundaries of a strata lot. In most strata plans, the boundary is the unfinished surface of the walls, floors and ceilings. The wiring running through the wall cavity sits outside that boundary, which puts it on the common property side. The strata's bylaws may shift some of that responsibility, so it is worth reading your specific bylaws and strata plan carefully, but the default rule favours common property.

What you typically own outright: the outlets, switches and light fixtures inside your suite, the wiring from the outlet box face inward, and your in-suite electrical panel (the breaker panel in your suite, if you have one). What the strata owns: the conductors in the wall cavities, the main electrical room, the risers feeding each floor, and the wiring in parkades and common areas.

This matters most in three situations. First, if you want to add a circuit, run new wiring or install an EV charger fed from a new circuit, you need a strata alteration agreement before an electrician can touch the walls. Second, if there is a wiring fault inside a wall, the strata is responsible for the repair cost, not you, unless your bylaws say otherwise or the damage was caused by something you did. Third, Metrotown-era high-rises (many built in the 1980s and 1990s) sometimes have moisture-related wiring damage from the leaky-condo period, and that

remediation is a strata expense.

For in-suite work that stays within your strata lot boundaries, such as swapping a light fixture, replacing an outlet or adding a device on an existing circuit without opening walls, you generally do not need council approval, though checking your bylaws first is always smart.

On the permit side, Burnaby runs its own electrical permit and inspection program, separate from Technical Safety BC, so any permitted electrical work in a Burnaby strata goes through the City of Burnaby's building department. A licensed electrical contractor will know this and pull the permit on your behalf.

If you are planning any work that touches the walls or adds capacity, start with a written request to your strata council and get the alteration agreement in writing before booking an electrician. Vancouver Electrical Repair can match you with a local electrician familiar with Burnaby strata work if you are ready to get quotes.

Flickering hallway lights in my Delta building, is that the council or BC Hydro?

Flickering lights in a Delta strata building can come from either side of the meter, and figuring out which one determines who pays and who you call. The short answer: **start with your strata council, because most causes are on the building side of the meter, not BC Hydro's.**

What's likely causing it

Flickering in a hallway (common property) usually traces to one of a few things: a failing fluorescent or LED driver in the fixture itself, a loose connection at a junction box or in the electrical room, an overloaded circuit serving common-area lighting, or a breaker that's starting to fail. In older Delta buildings from the 1960s–1980s, aluminum branch wiring in common areas is worth flagging, loose aluminum terminations at devices and fixtures are a classic source of intermittent faults, and they're a fire risk that deserves prompt attention.

BC Hydro's responsibility ends at the meter base. Everything from the main disconnect through the building's electrical rooms, corridors and suite panels is the strata's common property, and under the Strata Property Act, the strata corporation is responsible for maintaining and repairing common property. So the flickering hallway circuit almost certainly falls to the strata, not BC Hydro.

The one exception: if the flickering is building-wide and happens at the same time as a voltage dip you can feel on other floors or in suites, that can point to a utility-side issue, a loose neutral on the service drop, or a problem at the transformer. In that case, BC Hydro does want to know (their outage and power-quality line handles it), but even then the strata's electrician should be the one making that call after ruling out the building side first.

If you see any discolouration around a fixture, smell burning, or notice a warm switch or panel cover, treat it as urgent, don't wait for the next council meeting.

From a practical standpoint: report it in writing to your strata council or property manager, describe when it started and whether it's constant or intermittent, and ask them to log it as a maintenance request. Strata councils in BC are required to maintain common property in a reasonable state of repair. A licensed electrician should inspect the fixture, the circuit and the connections in the electrical room, in Delta, Technical Safety BC issues the electrical permit (Delta runs its inspections through Technical Safety BC rather than a municipal program), so any repair beyond a straight fixture swap will need a permit and inspection.

Repair costs for a straightforward fix, a bad driver, a loose connection, typically run **\$200–\$600** for a service call and the repair. If it turns out to be a wiring fault in the electrical room or a failing breaker, budget **\$400–\$1,000** depending on access and parts.

Ask the strata's electrician to confirm their Technical Safety BC licence number and WorkSafeBC coverage before work starts, the strata should be doing this as a matter of course, but it's worth verifying.

Want quotes for this? Vancouver Electrical Repair can match you with local electricians familiar with Delta strata work, for free.

Disclaimer: This guide is provided for informational purposes only by Vancouver Electrical Repair. It does not constitute professional advice. Always consult qualified, licensed contractors and your local electrical authority (your municipality or Technical Safety BC) before starting any electrical project. Information is current as of October 4, 2026 and may change. Visit vancouverelectricalrepair.com for the latest answers.