

**ORDINANCE NO.**

**AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE BUILDING OFFICIAL TO EXEMPT CERTAIN ELECTRICAL ACTIVITIES FROM THE ELECTRICAL PERMIT REQUIREMENT; EXTENDING THE DEADLINE FOR CERTAIN PERMIT APPLICATIONS; WAIVING THE ELECTRICAL CODE'S REGISTRATION REQUIREMENT; AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.**

**BE IT ORDAINED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF AUSTIN:**

**PART 1. FINDINGS.**

- (1) On January 31, 2023, a Winter Storm Warning was issued for the Austin area due to forecasted severe winter weather posing an imminent threat of widespread and severe property damage, injury, and loss of life due to a combination of prolonged freezing temperatures and rain resulting in heavy ice accumulation on freeways, surface roads and trees.
- (2) From January 31, 2023, through February 2, 2022, the City experienced prolonged freezing temperatures and freezing rain which resulted in significant ice accumulation on freeways, surface roads and trees ("2023 Winter Weather Event").
- (3) On February 3, 2023, Mayor Kirk Watson issued a Declaration of Local Disaster because the 2023 Winter Weather Event caused widespread and severe property damage and injury due to prolonged freezing temperatures, freezing rain, and ice accumulation.
- (4) On February 4, 2021, Governor Greg Abbott issued a Declaration of State of Disaster because the 2023 Winter Weather Event caused widespread and severe property damage and injury due to significant ice accumulations, sub-freezing temperatures, freezing rain and sleet, hazardous travel disruptions, power outages and heavy rain.
- (5) During the 2023 Winter Weather Event, there was significant damage to electric infrastructure. It is expected that much of the electrical infrastructure damage will require small-scale repairs.
- (6) The City's Electrical Code requires an individual to obtain a permit for most electrical activities. In this instance, the Building Official expects that the

number of small-scale electrical activities will be significant. As a result, the permit requirement may, in some circumstances, result in delays that are counter to the City's health and safety interests, which include preventing further damage to structures.

- (7) Because the number of structures that will require emergency repairs and replacements is significant, it will take additional time for individuals and entities to submit permit applications.

## **PART 2. BUILDING OFFICIAL'S AUTHORITY.**

- (A) The city council authorizes the Building Official to exempt certain electrical activities from the permit requirement established in Article 4 (*Electrical Code*) of Chapter 25-12 (*Technical Code*).

- (B) The exemptions authorized in Subsection (A) apply to electrical activities started on or after January 31st, 2023.

## **PART 3. PERMIT APPLICATIONS.**

An activity that is not exempt under Part 2 of this ordinance or Chapter 25-12 (*Technical Codes*) shall submit a permit application within five business days from the date the activity starts if the activity is:

- (1) an emergency repair or replacement; and
- (2) started in response to the 2023 Winter Weather Event.

## **PART 4. REGISTRATION.**

A person who is authorized under Texas law to repair, replace, or install electrical fixtures or systems is not required to register with the City before performing any work regulated by the Electrical Code.

## **PART 5. EXPIRATION.**

This ordinance expires on March 31, 2023.

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