

## **First Ever Jail Sentence for Doing Electrical Work without Licence**

*Court sends strong message to repeat offenders whose actions put public safety at risk.*

**Mississauga, ON – Oct.7, 2014.** On Oct. 2, 2014 a contractor was sentenced in a Hamilton, Ontario court to 30 days in jail and \$6,250 in fines on charges related to performing electrical work illegally and violating several Ontario College of Trade's requirements. This is the first time a jail sentence has been handed down by an Ontario court for this type of offence. The defendant was also placed on two years probation.

Richard Hazel, operating as Voltcom Electrical Services, was found guilty on eight charges: four counts of working without an electrical contractor's licence, one count of failing to obtain the required inspections, two counts of producing a false certificate of qualification, and one count of leaving behind unsafe electrical conditions at four homes in Hamilton and Burlington. Mr. Hazel was previously convicted in 2012 on 19 counts of violating electrical safety regulations at seven sites in the Windsor area resulting in a total fine of \$23,750.

In addition to the ESA charges, Hazel pled guilty to five related charges laid by the Ontario College of Trades and was fined an additional \$7,400 plus one year probation for those offences.

In October 2013, an ESA Inspector identified a renovation in a Hamilton home had been done without a permit and determined upon further investigation that repeat offender Richard Hazel had completed the work. Numerous electrical hazards were found. The investigation also found that Hazel falsely produced an Ontario College of Trade's certificate of qualification in order to gain employment with two licensed electrical contractors.

"The court has delivered a strong, clear message with this conviction and sentence that repeated, unlawful behavior that puts public safety at risk has serious consequences. Despite previous convictions, this individual continued to flout the law," said Normand Breton, General Manager, Registrar and Director Contractor Licensing and Powerline Safety. "We are very pleased to see that the court has taken this next important step which we hope will deter others in the underground economy who are working outside the law."

### **How to Ensure You Hire a Licensed Electrical Contractor**

Consumers are reminded when considering hiring someone to do electrical work to follow 'the three C's': **check** to ensure the contractor holds a valid ECRA/ESA electrical contractor licence (you can search the database at [www.esasafe.com](http://www.esasafe.com)); **confirm** that they are arranging the appropriate inspections from ESA; and **call** ESA at 1-877-ESA-SAFE (1-877-372-7233) if you suspect someone is misrepresenting themselves. "Don't settle the final bill until you have the ESA Certificate of Inspection in hand," added Breton.

Hiring an ECRA/ESA licensed electrical contractor ensures that the company you have hired:

- is fully insured
- uses qualified electricians to perform the electrical work you require
- will arrange for permits with the ESA
- can deliver an ESA Certificate of Inspection

### **About the Electrical Safety Authority (ESA)**

The Electrical Safety Authority's (ESA) role is to enhance public electrical safety in Ontario. As an administrative authority acting on behalf of the Government of Ontario, ESA is responsible for administering specific regulations related to the Ontario Electrical Safety Code, the licensing of Electrical Contractors and Master Electricians, electricity distribution system safety, and electrical product safety. ESA works extensively with stakeholders throughout the province on education, training and promotion to foster electrical safety across the province. More information on the Electrical Safety Authority can be found at [www.esasafe.com](http://www.esasafe.com), through Twitter @HomeandSafety and on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/ElectricalSafetyAuthority](https://www.facebook.com/ElectricalSafetyAuthority)

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