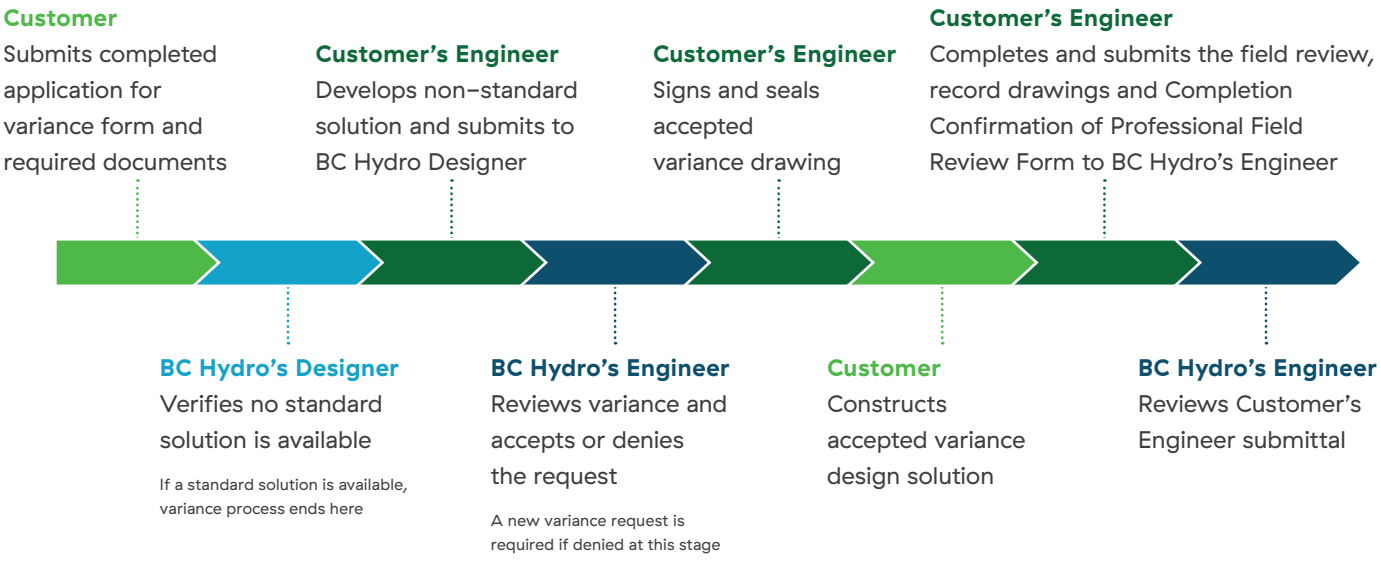
Customer guide: Making a distribution connection variance request

Definitions

Term	Definition
BC Hydro's Engineer	The BC Hydro authorized individual, who is qualified to review and accept/reject your variance request.
BC Hydro's Designer	A BC Hydro employee who is a skilled electrical designer in modifying the overhead and underground distribution system. The Designer is the individual who communicates directly with you and liaises with our Distribution Engineering team.
Customer	Any person whose application for electrical service has been accepted by BC Hydro or, in the absence of such an application, the Person with possession of the Premises to which Service is provided or the Owner or such other Person designated as the Customer in accordance with the Electric Tariff (for more, see **Electric Tariff**).
Customer's Professional on Record (PoR)	Professional Engineer registered in good standing with the Engineers and Geoscientists of British Columbia (EGBC), in the appropriate engineering discipline, who is the Professional of Record for your service connection and related works.
Variance	A departure from the current BC Hydro Standard design/construction. This variance is an engineered design that must be reviewed by BC Hydro.

Process map for customer requests for variance from BC Hydro distribution engineering standards



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Requesting a variance to a distribution service connection

We have an important role to play in meeting the province's electrification goals and our ability to connect new customers quickly and efficiently is an important part in this.

If you're looking to connect into our grid and your project requires a new connection, or modification to existing connection, the work is guided by our **distribution standards.**

If your request for a distribution connection cannot be achieved by following these standards, you may request what's referred to as a 'distribution system connection variance', if a standard solution cannot be found.

A variance can be made to electrical system assets owned by you, or by BC Hydro. Variances aren't common practice and are typically only made when there are design constraints at the site that don't allow for an electrical connection to be made following our distribution standards.

We'll only consider variance requests when they don't impact safety, reliability, or increase the associated costs for installing, operating, maintaining, or replacing the equipment.

Submitting a variance request

If a variance from our distribution standards is required, you can submit a **Customer request for a distribution standard variance form** to the distribution designer assigned to your project.

The request must be submitted at or before the time of your application for electrical service. Submitting a variance request later on in the design phase will lead to delays in meeting your requested in-service date.

We'll only review requests for a variance received before the start of construction. The variance request process must be used to address all proposed variances to our distribution standards prior to installation. If non-standard installation is constructed without a pre-approved variance, this would be considered a non-conformance or deficiency that we have the right to reject. We can then insist that it be built to BC Hydro standards using standard materials.

When submitting a variance request, please provide all necessary information and drawings. At a minimum this should include:

1. BC Hydro standard #, a variance to which is being requested.
2. Detailed description of the variance.
3. Clear indication of the design constraints in applying the BC Hydro standard.
4. Engineering drawings for the non-standard design, signed and sealed by a your Professional of Record (PoR)
5. If the non-standard design involves Civil/Structural/Geotechnical aspects, the Civil/Structural/Geotechnical components will need to be signed and sealed separately by qualified PoR(s) with expertise in each of the appropriate engineering discipline(s).

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The variance request process

Once your request form is received, we'll review the variance request submission for completeness and once verified, will forward the request to our engineering team.

When the form and all the required information has been submitted, our engineer will review the variance request and provide an initial response to you within 15 working days.

Our engineer may need to contact your engineer during the review process to get clarification or discuss revisions of your request.

The time it takes to review variance requests may impact the standard turnaround time for our design service connection or modification.

We'll inform you if the review will take longer due to complexity of the request.

Once the review has been completed, the BC Hydro engineer will respond to you with either a Letter of Acceptance or a Letter of Rejection.

LETTER OF ACCEPTANCE

If your variance request is accepted, field review by your Professional of Record (PoR) in compliance with EGBC requirements will be required.

Upon completion of the construction of your service, and prior to any work related to the installation by BC Hydro, the PoR will submit signed and sealed record drawings with the variances clearly identified. The PoR will then complete, sign, and seal the **Completion Confirmation of Professional Field Review Form** with copies of the field review reports, including photos.

The POR will ensure that the installation is built to the specifications of the signed and sealed variance documents previously submitted to us when the variance request was granted.

This complete document package is then sent to the BC Hydro engineer and distribution designer before we'll perform any work related to the installation.

Please note: If your variance is accepted, we may request additional changes to your design, as a condition of acceptance. Acceptance of any variance to a standard is unique and specific to the project and is not to be applied to any other project.

LETTER OF REJECTION

If your variance request is declined, it's assumed that our engineer and your engineer would have exhausted all attempts to alter the proposed variance request to make it acceptable.

At this time, you may contact your BC Hydro's designer and submit another variance request form for consideration that more closely aligns with the options proposed by BC Hydro following your previous request.