

National Electrical Safety Code®

Secretariat

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Abstract: This standard covers basic provisions for safeguarding persons from hazards arising from the installation, operation, or maintenance of 1) conductors and equipment in electric supply stations, and 2) overhead and underground electric supply and communication lines. It also includes work rules for the construction, maintenance, and operation of electric supply and communication lines and equipment.

The standard is applicable to the systems and equipment operated by utilities, or similar systems and equipment, of an industrial establishment or complex under the control of qualified persons.

This standard consists of the introduction, definitions, grounding rules, list of referenced and bibliographic documents, and Parts 1, 2, 3, and 4 of the 2002 Edition of the National Electrical Safety Code.

Keywords: communications industry safety; construction of communication lines; construction of electric supply lines; electrical safety; electric supply stations; electric utility stations; high-voltage safety; operation of communications systems; operation of electric supply systems; power station equipment; power station safety; public utility safety; safety work rules; underground communication line safety; underground electric line safety

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Foreword

(This foreword is not a part of Accredited Standards Committee C2-2002, National Electrical Safety Code®.)

This publication consists of the parts of the National Electrical Safety Code® (NESC®) currently in effect. The former practice of designating parts by editions has not been practical for some time. In the 1977 Edition, Parts 1 and 4 were 6th Editions; Part 2 was a 7th Edition; Part 3 was a revision of the 6th Edition; Part 2, Section 29, did not cover the same subject matter as the 5th Edition; and Part 3 was withdrawn in 1970. In the 1987 Edition, revisions were made in all parts, and revisions to all parts have been made in subsequent editions. It is therefore recommended that reference to the NESC be made solely by the year of the published volume and desired part number. Separate copies of the individual parts are not available.

Work on the NESC started in 1913 at the National Bureau of Standards (NBS), resulting in the publication of NBS Circular 49. The last complete edition of the Code (the 5th Edition, NBS Handbook H30) was issued in 1948, although separate portions had been available at various times starting in 1938. Part 2—Definitions, and the Grounding Rules, 6th Edition, was issued as NBS Handbook H81, ANSI C2.2-1960, in November 1961, but work on other parts was not actively in process again until 1970.

In 1970 the C2 Committee decided to delete the Rules for the Installation and Maintenance of Electric Utilization Equipment (Part 3 of the 5th Edition), now largely covered by the National Electrical Code (ANSI/NFPA 70), and the Rules for Radio Installations (Part 5 of the 5th Edition) from future editions. The Discussion of the NESC, issued as NBS Handbook H4 (1928 Edition) for the 4th Edition of the NESC and as NBS Handbook H39 for Part 2 of the Grounding Rules of the 5th Edition, was not published for the 6th Edition.

The 1981 Edition included major changes in Parts 1, 2, and 4 and minor changes in Part 4, and the incorporation of the rules common to all parts into Section 1. The 1981 Edition was revised to update all references and to list those references in a new Section 3. Rounded metric values, for information only, were added. Gender-related terminology was deleted. Section 1—Introduction, Section 2—Definitions, Section 3—References, and Section 9—Grounding Methods, were made applicable to each of the Parts 1, 2, 3, and 4.

The 1987 Edition was revised extensively. Definitions were changed or added. Requirements affecting grounding methods, electric supply stations, overhead line clearances and loading, underground lines, and work rules were revised.

The 1990 Edition included several major changes. General rules were revised. A significant change to the method for specifying overhead line clearances was made and the rationale added as Appendix A. Requirements for clearances of overhead lines from grain bins and an alternate method for determining the strength requirements for wood structures was added. Rules covering grounding methods, electric supply stations, underground lines, and work rules were changed.

In the 1993 Edition, changes were made in the rules applicable to emergency and temporary installations. In Section 9 and Parts 1, 2, and 3, rules were extended or clarified to include HVDC systems. The requirements for random separation of direct-buried supply and communication systems were modified for consistency and clarity, as was the rule in Part 4 on tagging electric supply circuits.

In the 1997 edition, the most notable general change that took place is that numerical values in the metric (SI) system are shown in the preferred position, with customary inch-foot-pound values (inside parentheses) following. A bibliography, Appendix B, which consists of a list of resources identified in notes or recommendations, was added. Changes were made to rules affecting grounding, electric supply stations, and overhead lines, particularly with regard to clearance rules applicable to emergency and temporary installations. Strength requirements contained in Sections 24, 25, and 26 were revised completely. Underground line requirements for random separation for underground lines of direct-buried cables were modified. The requirement for cable identification marking by means of sequentially placed logos was introduced. Work rules added a requirement that warning signs and tags comply with applicable ANSI standards, tagging requirements were clarified with regard to SCADA, and extensive requirements for fall protection were added.

In the 2002 Edition, several changes were made that affected all or several parts of the Code. Particularly, this edition clarifies interfaces between the NEC and NESC with regard to Code jurisdiction in the area of street lights and area lights. Also included is clarification for situations between utility workers and their

authorized contractors and installations on industrial complexes.

In Section 2, definitions for communication lines, de-energized, fiber-optic cable—communications, fiber-optic cable—supply, readily climbable supporting structures, and vault were either modified or added.

No changes were made in the 2002 Edition regarding use of earth or sea as a continuous conductor in HVDC systems. Subcommittee 1 reviewed a change proposal with regard to using earth or sea as a continuous conductor and did not see an immediate need to revise the NESC for this type of operation for HVDC systems in the United States. Although several systems in Europe and one in the Philippines currently use sea as a conductor, there are concerns that should be addressed before revising the Code. The subcommittee recognized the comments submitted by members of the IEEE Power Engineering Society Substations Committee and Transmission and Distribution Committee, the work accomplished within joint working groups in IEEE and NACE International, and further endorsements received from recognized HVDC experts. If there is desire by some to design and install a monopolar system, it is permissible under Rule 013A2 to do so as an experimental system. The subcommittee also recommended that any such system be limited to using sea, not land, as a sole conductor for any part of the circuit.

In Section 9—Grounding Methods, a new rule was added to cover grounding requirements for a communication entity that wishes to use its own separate ground electrode. This requires that the communication ground be bonded with the grounding electrode conductor of the supply system to assure equal potential between the two systems.

In Part 1—Electric Supply Stations, the rules were clarified to be applicable to both ac and dc circuits. DC station clearances were added to the appropriate table. Requirements were revised to allow exceptions from prohibiting storage of equipment within an electrical supply station. The exception allows storage of material essential for maintenance and temporary storage of material related to work in progress in the station or a nearby transmission line. Restrictions are required to maintain safe clearances and working conditions. A Tentative Interim Amendment (TIA) was approved to remove the implication that grounding may be omitted when working on conductors normally operating at 25 kV or less where a visible open switch exists. The statement is not applicable to Part 1, and it may be a leftover practice that is no longer valid.

In Part 2—Overhead Lines, additional wording was added to address the situation of supply workers working in close proximity to communication antennas. New wording was also added to cover clearance of line conductors from communication antennas, and to clarify clearances of conductors from grain bins, boat launching areas, service drops, support arms, and lighting luminaires. Clarification was added to relationship of approach distances for non-utility workers from overhead lines and associated equipment. A major revision to Sections 25 and 26 on Strength and Loading has begun and will span at least 3 Code cycles by the time it is completed. This is due to more sophisticated structural calculations that will be required, e.g., Load and Resistance Factor Design (LRFD), updated and improved input data from new wind and ice maps, and new pole materials that will supplement wood. Some change proposals were incorporated into the 2002 edition; others will be deferred until a later edition when the industry has become more familiar with the nature of these changes. For this edition, proposals were accepted to 1) treat wood, steel, and concrete poles with consistent Overhead Factors, and 2) include a new Extreme Wind Map that uses a new 3-s gust criteria, replacing the existing fastest-mile wind. In addition, expanded calculations are required due to the use of gust response factor, importance factor, and velocity pressure coefficient.

In Part 3—Underground Lines, the requirements for random separation changed to prohibit both communication lines and power from being any closer than 12 in from fuel or steam lines. Other new rules address location of pad-mounted equipment and pedestals and cable protection by means of climbing devices required to be installed within the manhole. Also included are revised rules on burial depth for streetlight cables and security of above ground equipment.

In Part 4—Work Rules, the maximum use voltage rating of rubber protective equipment was added as a requirement.

Substantive changes in the 2002 edition are identified by a bar in the left-hand margin. In several cases, rules have been relocated without substantive changes in the wording. In these cases, only the rule numbers have been indicated as having been changed.

The Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers, Inc. was designated as the administrative secretariat for C2 in January 1973, assuming the functions formerly performed by the National Bureau of Standards.

Comments on the rules and suggestions for their improvement are invited, especially from those who have experience in their practical application. In future editions every effort will be made to improve the rules, both

in the adequacy of coverage and in the clarification of requirements. Comments should be addressed to:

Secretary
National Electrical Safety Code Committee
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P.O. Box 1331
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A representative Committee on Interpretations has been established to prepare replies to requests for interpretation of the rules contained in the Code. Requests for interpretation should state the rule in question, as well as the conditions under which it is being applied. Interpretations are intended to clarify the intent of specific rules and are not intended to supply consulting information on the application of the Code. Requests for interpretation should be sent to the address above.

If the request is suitable for processing, it will be sent to the Interpretations Committee. After consideration by the committee, which may involve many exchanges of correspondence, the inquirer will be notified of its decision. Decisions are published regularly and may be ordered or accessed online at no cost at <http://standards.ieee.org/nesc>.

The NESC as written is a voluntary standard. However, some editions and some parts of the Code have been adopted, with and without changes, by some state and local jurisdictional authorities. To determine the legal status of the National Electrical Safety Code in any particular state or locality within a state, the authority having jurisdiction should be contacted.

The revision cycle for the 2007 edition of the NESC will be fully electronic. Change proposals and comments will no longer be accepted in hard copy, but will be submitted to the NESC Secretary online via the Internet. For information on how this electronic revision process will take place and for updates and complete information on the NESC, please visit the National Electrical Safety Code Zone on the IEEE Standards Web site at <http://standards.ieee.org/nesc>.

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 ATIS—Alliance for Telephone Industry Solutions
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 NSC—National Safety Council
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(Sections 30–39)

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(Sections 40–44)

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Contents

SECTION	PAGE
Letter Symbols for Units.....	xxxiii
Sec. 1. Introduction to the National Electrical Safety Code	1
010. Purpose	1
011. Scope	1
012. General Rules	1
013. Application	1
A. New Installations and Extensions	1
B. Existing Installations	2
014. Waiver	2
A. Emergency Installations	2
B. Temporary Overhead Installations	2
015. Intent.....	2
016. Effective Date	3
017. Units of Measure	3
Sec. 2. Definitions of Special Terms	4
Sec. 3. References	14
Sec. 9. Grounding Methods for Electric Supply and Communications Facilities	16
90. Purpose	16
91. Scope	16
92. Point of Connection of Grounding Conductor	16
A. Direct Current Systems That Are to Be Grounded	16
1. 750 V and below	16
2. Over 750 V	16
B. Alternating Current Systems That Are to Be Grounded	16
1. 750 V and below	16
2. Over 750 V	16
3. Separate Grounding Conductor	17
C. Messenger Wires and Guys	17
1. Messenger Wires	17
2. Guys	17
3. Common Grounding of Messengers and Guys on the Same Supporting Structure	17
D. Current in Grounding Conductor	17
E. Fences	18
93. Grounding Conductor and Means of Connection	18
A. Composition of Grounding Conductors	18
B. Connection of Grounding Conductors	19
C. Ampacity and Strength	19
1. System Grounding Conductors for Single-Grounded Systems	19
2. System Grounding Conductors for Multi-Grounded Alternating Current Systems	19
3. Grounding Conductors for Instrument Transformers	19
4. Grounding Conductors for Primary Surge Arresters	19
5. Grounding Conductors for Equipment, Messenger Wires, and Guys	19
6. Fences	19
7. Bonding of Equipment Frames and Enclosures	20
8. Ampacity Limit	20

SECTION	PAGE
9. Strength.....	20
D. Guarding and Protection	20
E. Underground	20
F. Common Grounding Conductor for Circuits, Metal Raceways, and Equipment	21
94. Grounding Electrodes	21
A. Existing Electrodes	21
1. Metallic Water Piping System	21
2. Local Systems	21
3. Steel Reinforcing Bars in Concrete Foundations and Footings	21
B. Made Electrodes	21
1. General.....	21
2. Driven Rods	22
3. Buried Wire, Strips, or Plates	22
4. Pole-Butt Plates and Wire Wraps	22
5. Concentric Neutral Cable	23
6. Concrete-Encased Electrodes	23
95. Method of Connection to Electrode	23
A. Ground Connections	23
B. Point of Connection to Piping Systems	24
C. Contact Surfaces	24
96. Ground Resistance Requirements	24
A. Supply Stations	24
B. Single-Grounded (Unigrounded or Delta) Systems	24
C. Multi-Grounded Systems	24
97. Separation of Grounding Conductors	25
98. Number 98 not used in this edition.	26
99. Additional Requirements for Communication Apparatus	26
A. Electrode	26
B. Electrode Connection.....	26
C. Bonding of Electrodes	26

Part 1. Rules for the Installation and Maintenance of Electric Supply Stations and Equipment

Sec. 10. Purpose and Scope of Rules	27
100. Purpose.....	27
101. Scope	27
Sec. 11. Protective Arrangements in Electric Supply Stations.....	28
110. General Requirements.....	28
A. Enclosure of Equipment.....	28
1. Types of Enclosures.....	28
2. Safety Clearance Zone	28
B. Rooms and Spaces	28
1. Construction.....	28
2. Use	28
3. Ventilation	30
4. Moisture and Weather	30
C. Electric Equipment	30
111. Illumination.....	30
A. Under Normal Conditions.....	30
B. Emergency Lighting	30
C. Fixtures	30
D. Attachment Plugs and Receptacles for General Use	30

Contents

SECTION	PAGE
E. Receptacles in Damp or Wet Locations	30
112. Floors, Floor Openings, Passageways, and Stairs	32
A. Floors	32
B. Passageways	32
C. Railings.....	33
D. Stair Guards	33
E. Top Rails	33
113. Exits	33
A. Clear Exits	33
B. Double Exits	33
C. Exit Doors	33
114. Fire-Extinguishing Equipment	33
Sec. 12. Installation and Maintenance of Equipment	34
120. General Requirements	34
121. Inspections	34
A. In-Service Equipment.....	34
B. Idle Equipment	34
C. Emergency Equipment	34
D. New Equipment.....	34
122. Guarding Shaft Ends, Pulleys, Belts, and Suddenly Moving Parts	34
A. Mechanical Transmission Machinery	34
B. Suddenly Moving Parts	34
123. Protective Grounding.....	34
A. Protective Grounding or Physical Isolation of Non-Current-Carrying Metal Parts.....	34
B. Grounding Method	34
C. Provision for Grounding Equipment During Maintenance	35
D. Grounding Methods for Direct-Current Systems over 750 V	35
124. Guarding Live Parts.....	35
A. Where Required.....	35
B. Strength of Guards	35
C. Types of Guards	35
1. Location or Physical Isolation.....	35
2. Shields or Enclosures	35
3. Supplemental Barriers or Guards Within Electric Supply Stations	36
4. Mats.....	36
5. Live Parts Below Supporting Surfaces for Persons	36
6. Insulating Covering on Conductors or Parts	36
125. Working Space About Electric Equipment	45
A. Working Space (600 V or Less)	45
1. Clear Spaces	45
2. Access and Entrance to Working Space	45
3. Working Space	45
4. Headroom Working Space	45
5. Front Working Space	45
B. Working Space Over 600 V	45
126. Equipment for Work on Energized Parts.....	46
127. Classified Locations	46
A. Coal-Handling Areas.....	46
B. Flammable and Combustible Liquids	46
C. Flammable Liquid Storage Area	47
D. Loading and Unloading Facilities	47

Contents

SECTION	PAGE
E. Gasoline-Dispensing Stations	47
F. Boilers	47
G. Gaseous Hydrogen Systems for Supply Equipment	47
H. Liquid Hydrogen Systems	48
I. Sulfur	48
J. Oxygen	48
K. Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG)	48
L. Natural Gas (Methane)	48
128. Identification	48
129. Mobile Hydrogen Equipment.....	48
Sec. 13. Rotating Equipment	49
130. Speed Control and Stopping Devices.....	49
A. Automatic Overspeed Trip Device for Prime Movers	49
B. Manual Stopping Devices	49
C. Speed Limit for Motors	49
D. Number 130D not used in this edition.....	49
E. Adjustable-Speed Motors	49
F. Protection of Control Circuits	49
131. Motor Control	49
132. Number 132 not used in this edition.....	49
133. Short-Circuit Protection	49
Sec. 14. Storage Batteries	50
140. General	50
141. Location	50
142. Ventilation	50
143. Racks	50
144. Floors in Battery Areas	50
145. Illumination for Battery Areas	50
146. Service Facilities	50
147. Number 147 not used in this edition.....	50
Sec. 15. Transformers and Regulators	51
150. Current-Transformer Secondary Circuits Protection When Exceeding 600 V	51
151. Grounding Secondary Circuits of Instrument Transformers.....	51
152. Location and Arrangement of Power Transformers and Regulators	51
A. Outdoor Installations	51
B. Indoor Installations	51
153. Short-Circuit Protection of Power Transformers	51
Sec. 16. Conductors	53
160. Application.....	53
161. Electrical Protection	53
A. Overcurrent Protection Required	53
B. Grounded Conductors	53
C. Insulated Power Cables.....	53
162. Mechanical Protection and Support	53
163. Isolation	53
164. Conductor Terminations	53
A. Insulation	53
B. Metal-Sheathed or Shielded Cable	53
Sec. 17. Circuit Breakers, Reclosers, Switches, and Fuses	54
170. Arrangement	54

SECTION	PAGE
171. Application	54
172. Circuit Breakers, Reclosers, and Switches Containing Oil	54
173. Switches and Disconnecting Devices	54
A. Capacity	54
B. Provisions for Disconnecting	54
C. Visible Break Switch	54
174. Disconnection of Fuses	54
Sec. 18. Switchgear and Metal-Enclosed Bus	55
180. Switchgear Assemblies	55
A. General Requirements for All Switchgear	55
B. Metal-Enclosed Power Switchgear	55
C. Dead-Front Power Switchboards	56
D. Motor Control Centers	56
E. Control Switchboards	56
181. Metal-Enclosed Bus	56
A. General Requirements for All Types of Bus	56
B. Isolated-Phase Bus	56
Sec. 19. Surge Arresters	58
190. General Requirements	58
191. Indoor Locations	58
192. Grounding Conductors	58
193. Installation	58
 Part 2. Safety Rules for the Installation and Maintenance of Overhead Electric Supply and Communication Lines	
Sec. 20. Purpose, Scope, and Application of Rules	59
200. Purpose	59
201. Scope	59
202. Application of Rules	59
Sec. 21. General Requirements	60
210. Referenced Sections	60
211. Number 211 not used in this edition.	60
212. Induced Voltages	60
213. Accessibility	60
214. Inspection and Tests of Lines and Equipment	60
A. When In Service	60
1. Initial Compliance With Rules	60
2. Inspection	60
3. Tests	60
4. Record of Defects	60
5. Remedying Defects	60
B. When Out of Service	60
1. Lines Infrequently Used	60
2. Lines Temporarily Out of Service	60
3. Lines Permanently Abandoned	60
215. Grounding of Circuits, Supporting Structures, and Equipment	61
A. Methods	61
B. Circuits	61
1. Common Neutral	61
2. Other Neutrals	61
3. Other Conductors	61
4. Surge Arresters	61

SECTION	PAGE
5. Use of Earth as Part of Circuit	61
C. Non-Current-Carrying Parts	61
1. General	61
2. Guys	61
3. Multiple Messengers on the Same Structure	61
216. Arrangement of Switches	62
A. Accessibility	62
B. Indicating Open or Closed Position	62
C. Locking	62
D. Uniform Position	62
217. General	62
A. Supporting Structures	62
1. Protection of Structures	62
2. Readily Climbable Supporting Structures	62
3. Identification	63
4. Obstructions	63
5. Decorative Lighting	63
B. Unusual Conductor Supports	63
218. Tree Trimming	63
A. General	63
B. At Line Crossings, Railroad Crossings, and Limited-Access Highway Crossings	63
Sec. 22. Relations Between Various Classes of Lines and Equipment	64
220. Relative Levels	64
A. Standardization of Levels	64
B. Relative Levels: Supply and Communication Conductors	64
1. Preferred Levels	64
2. Special Construction for Supply Circuits, the Voltage of Which Is 600 V or Less and Carrying Power Not in Excess of 5 kW	64
C. Relative Levels: Supply Lines of Different Voltage Classifications (as classified in Table 235-5)	65
1. At Crossings or Conflicts	65
2. On Structures Used Only by Supply Conductors	65
D. Identification of Overhead Conductors	65
E. Identification of Equipment on Supporting Structures	65
221. Avoidance of Conflict	65
222. Joint Use of Structures	65
223. Communications Protective Requirements	66
A. Where Required	66
B. Means of Protection	66
224. Communication Circuits Located Within the Supply Space and Supply Circuits Located Within the Communication Space	66
A. Communication Circuits Located in the Supply Space	66
B. Supply Circuits Used Exclusively in the Operation of Communication Circuits	67
225. Electric Railway Construction	67
A. Trolley-Contact Conductor Fastenings	67
B. High-Voltage Contact Conductors	67
C. Third Rails	67
D. Prevention of Loss of Contact at Railroad Crossings at Grade	67
E. Guards Under Bridges	68
Sec. 23. Clearances	69
230. General	69

SECTION	PAGE
A. Application	69
1. Permanent and Temporary Installations	69
2. Emergency Installations	69
B. Measurement of Clearance and Spacing	69
C. Supply Cables	69
D. Covered Conductors	70
E. Neutral Conductors	70
F. Fiber-Optic Cable	70
1. Fiber-optic—supply cable	70
2. Fiber-optic—communication cable	70
G. Alternating- and Direct-Current Circuits	70
H. Constant-Current Circuits	70
I. Maintenance of Clearances and Spacings	71
231. Clearances of Supporting Structures From Other Objects	71
A. From Fire Hydrants	71
B. From Streets, Roads, and Highways	71
C. From Railroad Tracks	71
232. Vertical Clearances of Wires, Conductors, Cables, and Equipment Above Ground, Roadway, Rail, or Water Surfaces	71
A. Application	71
B. Clearance of Wires, Conductors, Cables, Equipment, and Support Arms Mounted on Supporting Structures	72
1. Clearance to Wires, Conductors, and Cables	72
2. Clearance to Unguarded Rigid Live Parts of Equipment	72
3. Clearance to Support Arms and Equipment Cases	72
4. Street and Area Lighting	72
C. Additional Clearances for Wires, Conductors, Cables, and Unguarded Rigid Live Parts of Equipment	72
1. Voltages Exceeding 22 kV	72
D. Alternate Clearances for Voltages Exceeding 98 kV AC to Ground or 139 kV DC to Ground	73
1. Sag Conditions of Line Conductors	73
2. Reference Heights	73
3. Electrical Component of Clearance	73
4. Limit	73
233. Clearances Between Wires, Conductors, and Cables Carried on Different Supporting Structures	85
A. General	85
1. Conductor Movement Envelope	85
2. Clearance Envelope	85
B. Horizontal Clearance	89
1. Clearance Requirements	89
2. Alternate Clearances for Voltages Exceeding 98 kV AC to Ground or 139 kV DC to Ground	89
C. Vertical Clearance	89
1. Clearance Requirements	89
2. Voltages Exceeding 22 kV	89
3. Alternate Clearances for Voltage Exceeding 98 kV AC to Ground or 139 kV DC to Ground	90
234. Clearance of Wires, Conductors, Cables, and Equipment From Buildings, Bridges, Rail Cars, Swimming Pools, and Other Installations	96
A. Application	96
1. Vertical and Horizontal Clearances (No Wind Displacement)	96
2. Horizontal Clearances (With Wind Displacement)	96

SECTION	PAGE
3. Transition Between Horizontal and Vertical Clearances	96
B. Clearances of Wires, Conductors, and Cables From Other Supporting Structures	96
C. Clearances of Wires, Conductors, Cables, and Rigid Live Parts From Buildings, Signs, Billboards, Chimneys, Radio and Television Antennas, Tanks, and Other Installations Except Bridges	99
1. Vertical and Horizontal Clearances	99
2. Guarding of Supply Conductors and Rigid Live Parts	99
3. Supply Conductors Attached to Buildings or Other Installations	99
4. Communication Conductors Attached to Buildings or Other Installations	100
5. Ladder Space	100
D. Clearance of Wires, Conductors, Cables, and Unguarded Rigid Live Parts From Bridges	107
1. Vertical and Horizontal Clearances	107
2. Guarding Trolley-Contact Conductors Located Under Bridges	109
E. Clearance of Wires, Conductors, Cables, or Unguarded Rigid Live Parts Installed Over or Near Swimming Areas With No Wind Displacement	109
1. Swimming Pools	109
2. Beaches and Waterways Restricted to Swimming	109
3. Waterways Subject to Water Skiing	109
F. Clearances of Wires, Conductors, Cables, and Rigid Live Parts From Grain Bins	114
1. Grain Bins Loaded by Permanently Installed Augers, Conveyers, or Elevator Systems	114
2. Grain Bins Loaded by Portable Augers, Conveyers or Elevators (With No Wind Displacement)	115
G. Additional Clearances for Voltages Exceeding 22 kV for Wires, Conductors, Cables, and Unguarded Rigid Live Parts of Equipment	117
H. Alternate Clearances for Voltages Exceeding 98 kV AC to Ground or 139 kV DC to Ground	117
1. Sag Conditions of Line Conductors	117
2. Reference Distances	117
3. Electrical Component of Clearance	117
4. Limit	118
I. Clearance of Wires, Conductors, and Cables to Rail Cars	118
1. Rules 232B1 and 232C1	118
2. Rule 232D	118
J. Clearance of Equipment Mounted on Supporting Structures	118
1. Clearance to Unguarded Rigid Live Parts of Equipment	118
2. Clearance to Equipment Cases	118
235. Clearance for Wires, Conductors, or Cables Carried on the Same Supporting Structure	121
A. Application of Rule	121
1. Multiconductor Wires or Cables	121
2. Conductors Supported by Messengers or Span Wires	121
3. Line Conductors of Different Circuits	121
B. Horizontal Clearance Between Line Conductors	121
1. Fixed Supports	121
2. Suspension Insulators	126
3. Alternate Clearances for Different Circuits Where One or Both Circuits Exceed 98 kV AC to Ground or 139 kV DC to Ground	126
C. Vertical Clearance Between Line Conductors	126
1. Basic Clearance for Conductors of Same or Different Circuits	127

SECTION	PAGE
2. Additional Clearances	127
3. Alternate Clearances for Different Circuits Where One or Both Exceed 98 kV AC, or 139 kV DC to Ground	133
4. Communication Worker Safety Zone	133
D. Diagonal Clearance Between Line Wires, Conductors, and Cables Located at Different Levels on the Same Supporting Structure.....	134
E. Clearances in Any Direction From Line Conductors to Supports, and to Vertical or Lateral Conductors, Span, or Guy Wires Attached to the Same Support	138
1. Fixed Supports	138
2. Suspension Insulators	138
3. Alternate Clearances for Voltages Exceeding 98 kV AC to Ground or 139 kV DC to Ground	138
F. Clearances Between Circuits of Different Voltage Classifications Located in the Supply Space on the Same Support Arm	139
G. Conductor Spacing: Vertical Racks	140
H. Clearance and Spacing Between Communication Conductors, Cables, and Equipment.....	141
I. Clearances in Any Direction From Supply Line Conductors to Communication Antennas in the Supply Space Attached to the Same Supporting Structure	141
236. Climbing Space	141
A. Location and Dimensions	141
B. Portions of Supporting Structures in Climbing Space	141
C. Support Arm Location Relative to Climbing Space	142
D. Location of Equipment Relative to Climbing Space	142
E. Climbing Space Between Conductors	142
F. Climbing Space on Buckarm Construction	144
G. Climbing Space Past Longitudinal Runs Not on Support Arms	144
H. Climbing Space Past Vertical Conductors	144
I. Climbing Space Near Ridge-Pin Conductors	144
237. Working Space	145
A. Location of Working Spaces	145
B. Dimensions of Working Spaces	145
1. Along the Support Arm	145
2. At Right Angles to the Support Arm	145
3. Vertically	145
C. Location of Vertical and Lateral Conductors Relative to Working Spaces	146
D. Location of Buckarms Relative to Working Spaces	146
1. Standard Height of Working Space	146
2. Reduced Height of Working Space	146
E. Guarding of Energized Equipment.....	146
F. Working Clearances From Energized Equipment.....	146
238. Vertical Clearance Between Certain Communications and Supply Facilities Located on the Same Structure	147
A. Equipment	147
B. Clearances in General	147
C. Clearances for Span Wires or Brackets	147
D. Clearance of Drip Loops of Luminaire or Traffic Signal Brackets	147
E. Communication Worker Safety Zone	147
239. Clearance of Vertical and Lateral Facilities From Other Facilities and Surfaces on the Same Supporting Structure	149
A. General	149

SECTION	PAGE
B. Location of Vertical or Lateral Conductors Relative to Climbing Spaces, Working Spaces, and Pole Steps	149
C. Conductors Not in Conduit	149
D. Guarding and Protection Near Ground	149
E. Requirements for Vertical and Lateral Supply Conductors on Supply Line Structures or Within Supply Space on Jointly Used Structures	149
1. General Clearances	149
2. Special Cases	149
F. Requirements for Vertical and Lateral Communication Conductors on Communication Line Structures or Within the Communication Space on Jointly Used Structures	150
1. Clearances From Communication Conductors	150
2. Clearances From Supporting Structure Surfaces	150
G. Requirements for Vertical Supply Conductors and Cables Passing Through Communication Space on Jointly Used Line Structures	150
1. Guarding—General	150
2. Cables and Conductors in Conduit or Covering	151
3. Protection Near Trolley, Ungrounded Traffic Signal, or Ungrounded Luminaire Attachments	151
4. Aerial Services	151
5. Clearance From Through Bolts and Other Metal Objects	151
H. Requirements for Vertical Communication Conductors Passing Through Supply Space on Jointly Used Structures	151
1. Metal-Sheathed Communication Cables	151
2. Communication Conductors	151
3. Communication Grounding Conductors	151
4. Clearance From Through Bolts and Other Metal Objects	152
I. Operating Rods	152
J. Additional Rules for Standoff Brackets	152
Sec. 24. Grades of Construction	155
240. General	155
241. Application of Grades of Construction to Different Situations	155
A. Supply Cables	155
B. Order of Grades	155
C. At Crossings	155
1. Grade of Upper Line	155
2. Grade of Lower Line	155
3. Multiple Crossings	155
D. Conflicts	155
242. Grades of Construction for Conductors	155
A. Constant-Current Circuit Conductors	156
B. Railway Feeder and Trolley-Contact Circuit Conductors	156
C. Communication Circuit Conductors Located in the Supply Space	156
D. Fire-Alarm Circuit Conductors	156
E. Neutral Conductors of Supply Circuits	156
F. Surge-Protection Wires	156
243. Grades of Construction for Line Supports	160
A. Structures	160
B. Crossarms and Support Arms	160
C. Pins, Armless Construction Brackets, Insulators, and Conductor Fastenings	160
Sec. 25. Loading for Grades B and C	161

SECTION	PAGE
250. General Loading Requirements and Maps	161
A. General	161
B. Combined Ice and Wind Loading	161
C. Extreme Wind Loading	161
1. Velocity Pressure Exposure Coefficient k_z	163
2. Gust Response Factor, G_{RF}	163
251. Conductor Loading	170
A. General	170
B. Load Components	170
1. Vertical Load Component	170
2. Horizontal Load Component	170
3. Total Load	170
252. Loads on Line Supports	171
A. Assumed Vertical Loads	171
B. Assumed Transverse Loads	171
1. Transverse Loads From Conductors and Messengers	171
2. Wind Loads on Structures	171
3. At Angles	171
4. Span Lengths	171
C. Assumed Longitudinal Loading	171
1. Change in Grade of Construction	171
2. Jointly Used Poles at Crossings Over Railroads, Communication Lines, or Limited-Access Highways	172
3. Deadends	172
4. Unequal Spans and Unequal Vertical Loads	172
5. Stringing Loads	172
6. Longitudinal Capability	172
7. Communication Conductors on Unguyed Supports at Railroad and Limited-Access Highway Crossings	172
D. Simultaneous Application of Loads	172
253. Overload Factors for Structures, Crossarms, Support Hardware, Guys, Foundations, and Anchors	172
Sec. 26. Strength Requirements	175
260. General (see also Section 20)	175
A. Preliminary Assumptions	175
B. Application of Strength Factors	175
261. Grades B and C Construction	175
A. Supporting Structures	175
1. Metal, Prestressed-, and Reinforced-Concrete Structures	175
2. Wood Structures	176
3. Transverse-Strength Requirements for Structures Where Side Guying Is Required, But Can Only Be Installed at a Distance	177
4. Longitudinal-Strength Requirements for Sections of Higher Grade in Lines of a Lower-Grade Construction	177
B. Strength of Foundations, Settings, and Guy Anchors	177
C. Strength of Guys and Guy Insulators	177
1. Metal and Prestressed-Concrete Structures	177
2. Wood and Reinforced-Concrete Poles and Structures	177
D. Crossarms and Braces	178
1. Concrete and Metal Crossarms and Braces	178
2. Wood Crossarms and Braces	178
3. Crossarms and Braces of Other Materials	178
4. Additional Requirements	178

SECTION	PAGE
E. Insulators.....	179
F. Strength of Pin-Type or Similar Construction and Conductor Fastenings	179
1. Longitudinal Strength	179
2. Double Pins and Conductor Fastenings	179
3. Single Supports Used in Lieu of Double Wood Pins	179
G. Armless Construction	179
1. General.....	179
2. Insulating Material.....	179
3. Other Components	179
H. Open Supply Conductors and Overhead Shield Wires	179
1. Sags and Tensions	179
2. Splices, Taps, and Dead-End Fittings.....	180
3. Trolley-Contact Conductors	180
I. Supply Cable Messengers	180
J. Open-Wire Communication Conductors	180
K. Communication Cables.....	180
L. Paired Communication Conductors	180
1. Paired Conductors Supported on Messenger.....	180
2. Paired Conductors Not Supported on Messenger.....	181
M. Support Hardware	181
262. Number 262 not used in this edition	183
263. Grade N Construction	183
A. Poles.....	183
B. Guys	183
C. Crossarm Strength.....	183
D. Supply-Line Conductors	183
E. Service Drops.....	183
1. Size of Open-Wire Service Drops	183
2. Tension of Open-Wire Service Drops	184
3. Cabled Service Drops	184
F. Trolley-Contact Conductors	184
G. Communication Conductors	184
H. Street and Area Lighting Equipment	184
I. Insulators.....	184
264. Guying and Bracing	185
A. Where Used.....	185
B. Strength.....	185
C. Point of Attachment	185
D. Guy Fastenings	185
E. Guy Markers and Protection	186
F. Electrolysis.....	186
G. Anchor Rods	186
Sec. 27. Line Insulation	187
270. Application of Rule	187
271. Material and Marking.....	187
272. Ratio of Flashover to Puncture Voltage	187
273. Insulation Level.....	187
274. Factory Tests	187
275. Special Insulator Applications	187
A. Insulators for Constant-Current Circuits.....	187
B. Insulators for Single-Phase Circuits Directly Connected to Three-Phase Circuits	188

SECTION	PAGE
276. Number 276 Not Used in this Edition	188
277. Mechanical Strength of Insulators	188
278. Aerial Cable Systems	188
A. Electrical Requirements	188
B. Mechanical Requirements	189
279. Guy and Span Insulators	189
A. Insulators	189
1. Properties of Guy Insulators	189
2. Use of Guy Insulators	189
3. Corrosion Protection	189
B. Span-Wire Insulators	189
1. Properties of Span-Wire Insulators	189
2. Use of Span-Wire Insulators	190
Sec. 28 Section number 28 not used in this edition	190
Sec. 29 Section number 29 not used in this edition	190
 Part 3. Safety Rules for the Installation and Maintenance of Underground Electric Supply and Communication Lines	
Sec. 30. Purpose, Scope, and Application of Rules	191
300. Purpose	191
301. Scope	191
302. Application of Rules	191
Sec. 31. General Requirements Applying to Underground Lines	192
310. Referenced Sections	192
311. Installation and Maintenance	192
312. Accessibility	192
313. Inspection and Tests of Lines and Equipment	192
A. When In Service	192
1. Initial Compliance With Safety Rules	192
2. Inspection	192
3. Tests	192
4. Record of Defects	192
5. Remedying Defects	192
B. When Out of Service	192
1. Lines Infrequently Used	192
2. Lines Temporarily Out of Service	192
3. Lines Permanently Abandoned	192
314. Grounding of Circuits and Equipment	192
A. Methods	192
B. Conductive Parts to Be Grounded	192
C. Circuits	193
1. Neutrals	193
2. Other Conductors	193
3. Surge Arresters	193
4. Use of Earth as Part of Circuit	193
315. Communications Protective Requirements	193
A. Where Required	193
B. Means of Protection	193
316. Induced Voltage	193
Sec. 32. Underground Conduit Systems	194
320. Location	194

Contents

SECTION	PAGE
A. Routing.....	194
1. General.....	194
2. Natural Hazards	194
3. Highways and Streets	194
4. Bridges and Tunnels	194
5. Crossing Railroad Tracks	194
6. Submarine Crossing.....	194
B. Separation From Other Underground Installations.....	194
1. General.....	194
2. Separations Between Supply and Communication Conduit Systems	195
3. Sewers, Sanitary and Storm.....	195
4. Water Lines.....	195
5. Gas and Other Fuel Lines	195
6. Steam Lines	195
321. Excavation and Backfill	195
A. Trench	195
B. Quality of Backfill	195
322. Ducts and Joints	195
A. General.....	195
B. Installation	196
1. Restraint.....	196
2. Joints.....	196
3. Externally Coated Pipe	196
4. Building Walls.....	196
5. Bridges.....	196
6. In Vicinity of Manholes.....	196
323. Manholes, Handholes, and Vaults.....	196
A. Strength.....	196
B. Dimensions	198
C. Manhole Access	198
D. Covers	198
E. Vault and Utility Tunnel Access.....	198
F. Ladder Requirements	199
G. Drainage.....	199
H. Ventilation	199
I. Mechanical Protection	199
J. Identification	199
Sec. 33. Supply Cable.....	200
330. General	200
331. Sheaths and Jackets.....	200
332. Shielding	200
A. General.....	200
B. Material.....	200
333. Cable Accessories and Joints	200
Sec. 34. Cable in Underground Structures	201
340. General	201
341. Installation.....	201
A. General.....	201
B. Cable in Manholes and Vaults	201
1. Supports	201
2. Clearance	201
3. Identification.....	202
342. Grounding and Bonding.....	202

Contents

SECTION	PAGE
343. Fireproofing	202
344. Communication Cables Containing Special Supply Circuits	202
Sec. 35. Direct-Buried Cable	204
350. General	204
351. Location and Routing	204
A. General	204
B. Natural Hazards	205
C. Other Conditions	205
1. Swimming Pools	205
2. Buildings and Other Structures	205
3. Railroad Tracks	205
4. Highways and Streets	206
5. Submarine Crossings	206
352. Installation	206
A. Trenching	206
B. Plowing	206
C. Boring	206
D. Depth of Burial	206
353. Deliberate Separations—Equal to or Greater Than 300 mm (12 in) From Underground Structures or Other	207
A. General	207
B. Crossings	207
C. Parallel Facilities	207
D. Thermal Protection	207
354. Random Separation—Separation Less Than 300 mm (12 in) From Underground Structures or Other Cables	207
A. General	207
B. Supply Cables or Conductors	207
C. Communication Cables or Conductors	207
D. Supply and Communication Cables or Conductors	208
1. General	208
2. Grounded Bare or Semiconducting Jacketed Neutral Supply Cables	208
3. Insulating Jacketed Grounded Neutral Supply Cables	209
4. Insulating Jacketed Grounded Neutral Supply Cables in Nonmetallic Duct	209
E. Supply and Communication Cables or Conductors and Non-Metallic Water and Sewer Lines	209
Sec. 36. Risers	210
360. General	210
361. Installation	210
362. Pole Risers—Additional Requirements	210
363. Pad-Mounted Installations	210
Sec. 37. Supply Cable Terminations	211
370. General	211
371. Support at Terminations	211
372. Identification	211
373. Clearances in Enclosures or Vaults	211
374. Grounding	211
Sec. 38. Equipment	212
380. General	212
381. Design	212
382. Location in Underground Structures	213

SECTION	PAGE
383. Installation.....	213
384. Grounding	213
385. Identification	213
Sec. 39. Installation in Tunnels	214
390. General	214
391. Environment.....	214
 Part 4. Rules for the Operation of Electric Supply and Communications Lines and Equipment	
Sec. 40. Purpose and Scope.....	215
400. Purpose.....	215
401. Scope	215
402. Referenced Sections	215
Sec. 41. Supply and Communications Systems—Rules for Employers	216
410. General Requirements	216
A. General.....	216
B. Emergency Procedures and First Aid Rules	216
C. Responsibility	216
411. Protective Methods and Devices	216
A. Methods	216
B. Devices and Equipment	217
C. Inspection and Testing of Protective Devices.....	217
D. Signs and Tags for Employee Safety	217
E. Identification and Location	217
F. Fall Protection.....	217
Sec. 42. General Rules for Employees	218
420. Personal General Precautions.....	218
A. Rules and Emergency Methods	218
B. Qualifications of Employees.....	218
C. Safeguarding Oneself and Others	218
D. Energized or Unknown Conditions.....	218
E. Ungrounded Metal Parts	218
F. Arcing Conditions.....	219
G. Liquid-Cell Batteries.....	219
H. Tools and Protective Equipment.....	219
I. Clothing	219
J. Ladders and Supports.....	219
K. Fall Protection	219
L. Fire Extinguishers	220
M. Machines or Moving Parts	220
N. Fuses	220
O. Cable Reels	220
P. Street and Area Lighting.....	221
421. General Operating Routines.....	221
A. Duties of a First-Level Supervisor or Person in Charge	221
B. Area Protection	221
1. Areas Accessible to Vehicular and Pedestrian Traffic	221
2. Areas Accessible to Employees Only	221
3. Locations With Crossed or Fallen Wires	221
C. Escort	221
422. Overhead Line Operating Procedures	222
A. Setting, Moving, or Removing Poles In or Near Energized Electric Supply Lines	222
B. Checking Structures Before Climbing.....	222

Contents

SECTION	PAGE
C. Installing and Removing Wires or Cables.....	222
423. Underground Line Operating Procedures.....	222
A. Guarding Manhole and Street Openings	222
B. Testing for Gas in Manholes and Unventilated Vaults	222
C. Flames	223
D. Excavation.....	223
E. Identification	223
F. Operation of Power-Driven Equipment	223
Sec. 43. Additional Rules for Communications Employees.....	224
430. General	224
431. Approach to Energized Conductors or Parts	224
432. Joint-Use Structures.....	224
433. Attendant on Surface at Joint-Use Manhole.....	224
434. Sheath Continuity	224
Sec. 44. Additional Rules for Supply Employees.....	226
440. General	226
441. Energized Conductors or Parts	226
A. Minimum Approach Distance to Live Parts.....	226
1. General.....	226
2. Precautions for Approach— Voltages from 51 V to 300 V	226
3. Precautions for Approach— Voltages from 301 V to 72.5 kV	226
4. Transient Overvoltage Control Above 72.5 kV	227
5. Altitude Correction	227
6. Calculation of Approach Distances.....	227
B. Additional Approach Requirements.....	235
C. Live-Line Tool Clear Insulation Length	235
1. Clear Live-Line Tool Length	235
2. Live-Line Conductor Support Tool Length	235
442. Switching Control Procedures	236
A. Designated Person	236
B. Specific Work.....	236
C. Operations at Stations.....	236
D. Re-energizing After Work.....	236
E. Tagging Electric Supply Circuits Associated With Work Activities	236
F. Restoration of Service After Automatic Trip	237
G. Repeating Oral Messages	237
443. Work on Energized Lines and Equipment.....	237
A. General Requirements	237
B. Requirement for Assisting Employee	238
C. Opening and Closing Switches	238
D. Working Position.....	238
E. Protecting Employees by Switches and Disconnectors	238
F. Making Connections	238
G. Switchgear	238
H. Current Transformer Secondaries	238
I. Capacitors	239
J. Gas-Insulated Equipment	239
K. Attendant on Surface	239
L. Unintentional Grounds on Delta Circuits	239
444. De-energizing Equipment or Lines to Protect Employees	239
A. Application of Rule	239
B. Employee's Request	239
C. Operating Switches, Disconnectors, and Tagging	239
D. Employee's Protective Grounds	240
E. Proceeding With Work.....	240
F. Reporting Clear—Transferring Responsibility	240

Contents

G. Removal of Tags	240
H. Sequence of Re-energizing	240
445. Protective Grounds.....	241
A. Installing Grounds.....	241
1. Current-Carrying Capacity of Grounds	241
2. Initial Connections.....	241
3. Test for Voltage	241
4. Completing Grounds.....	241
B. Removing Grounds	241
446. Live Work	241
447. Protection Against Arcing and Other Damage While Installing and Maintaining Insulators and Conductors	242

Contents

FIGURES	RULE	PAGE
Figure D-1.	Sag and Apparent Sag.....	Sec. 2 10
Figure 110-1	Safety Clearance to Electric Supply Station Fences.....	110A2 29
Figure 124-1.	Clearance From Live Parts.....	124A1 36
Figure 124-2.	Railing Used as Guards.....	124C3 44
Figure 233-1.	Use of Clearance Envelope and Conductor Movement Envelopes to Determine Applicable Clearance.....	233A 86
Figure 233-2.	Conductor Movement Envelope.....	233A1a 87
Figure 233-3.	Clearance Envelope.....	233B 89
Figure 234-1(a)	Clearance Diagram for Building.....	234A3 97
Figure 234-1(b)	Clearance Diagram for Other Structures.....	234A3 97
Figure 234-1(c)	Transitional Clearance When H is Greater Than V.....	234 97
Figure 234-2.	Clearances of Service Drop Terminating on Support Mast.....	234C3d(1)(b) 108
Figure 234-3.	Swimming Pool Clearances.....	234E3 109
Figure 234-4(a)	Clearance Envelope for Grain Bins Filled by Permanently Installed Augers, Conveyors, or Elevators.....	234F2c 115
Figure 234-4(b)	Clearance Envelope for Grain Bins Filled by Portable Augers, Conveyors, or Elevators.....	234F2a 116
Figure 234-5	Rail Car Clearances.....	234I 119
Figure 235-1.	Clearance Diagram for Energized Conductor.....	235D 134
Figure 236-1.	Rule 236G, Exception 3.....	236G 145
Figure 237-1.	Obstruction of Working Space by Buckarm.....	237D1 146
Figure 250-1.	General Loading Map of United States With Respect to Loading of Overhead Lines.....	250B 162
Figure 250-2(a)	Basic Wind Speeds (miles per hour).....	250C 166
Figure 250-2(b)	Basic Wind Speeds.....	250C 167
Figure 250-2(c)	Western Gulf of Mexico Hurricane Coastline.....	250C 168
Figure 250-2(d)	Eastern Gulf of Mexico and Southeastern US Hurricane Coastline.....	250C 169
Figure 250-2(e)	Mid and Northern Atlantic Hurricane Coastline.....	250C 169
Figure 323-1.	Roadway Vehicle Load.....	323A1 197
Figure 323-2.	Wheel Load Area.....	323A1 197
Figure 350-1.	Symbols for Identification of Buried Cables.....	350G 205
 TABLES		
Table 110-1	Values for Use with Fig 110-1.....	11B2 29
Table 111-1.	Illumination Levels.....	111A 31
Table 124-1.	Clearance From Live Parts.....	124A1 37
Table 125-1.	Working Space.....	125A3 45
Table 232-1.	Vertical Clearance of Wires, Conductors, and Cables Above Ground, Roadway, Rail, or Water Surfaces.....	232B1 74
Table 232-2.	Vertical Clearance of Equipment Cases, Support Arms, Platforms, Braces and Unguarded Rigid Live Parts Above Ground, Roadway, or Water Surfaces.....	232B2 81
Table 232-3.	Reference Heights.....	232D2 83
Table 232-4.	Electrical Component of Clearance in Rule 232D3a.....	232D3a 84
Table 233-1.	Vertical Clearance Between Wires, Conductors, and Cables Carried on Different Supporting Structures.....	233C1 91
Table 233-2.	Clearance Between Supply Wires, Conductors, and Cables in Rule 233C3b(1).....	233C3b(1) 94
Table 233-3.	Reference Heights.....	233C3a 95
Table 234-1.	Clearance of Wires, Conductors, Cables, and Unguarded Rigid Live Parts Adjacent but Not Attached to Buildings and Other Installations Except Bridges.....	234C1a 104

Contents

TABLES		RULE	PAGE
Table 234-2.	Clearance of Wires, Conductors, Cables, and Unguarded Rigid Live Parts From Bridges	234D1a	110
Table 234-3.	Clearance of Wires, Conductors, Cables or Unguarded Rigid Live Parts Over or Near Swimming Pools.....	234E1	113
Table 234-4.	Electrical Component of Clearance of Buildings, Bridges, and Other Installations	234H3a	
Table 234-5.	Reference Distances	234H2	121
Table 235-1.	Horizontal Clearance Between Wires, Conductors, or Cables at Supports	235B1a	123
Table 235-2.	Horizontal Clearances Between Line Conductors Smaller Than AWG No. 2 at Supports, Based on Sags	235B1b(1)	124
Table 235-3.	Horizontal Clearances Between Line Conductors AWG No. 2 or Larger at Supports, Based on Sags	235B1b(2)	125
Table 235-4.	Electrical Clearances in Rule 235B3a(1).....	235B3a(1)	128
Table 235-5.	Vertical Clearance Between Conductors at Supports	235C1	131
Table 235-6.	Clearance in Any Direction From Line Conductors to Supports and to Vertical or Lateral Conductors, Span, or Guy Wires Attached to the Same Support	235E1	135
Table 235-7.	Clearance in Any Direction From Line Conductors to Supports	235E3b	140
Table 236-1.	Horizontal Clearance Between Conductors Bounding the Climbing Space.....	236E	143
Table 238-1.	Vertical Clearance Between Supply Conductors and Communications Equipment, Between Communication Conductors and Supply Equipment, and Between Supply and Communications Equipment.....	238B	148
Table 238-2.	Vertical Clearance of Span Wires and Brackets From Communication Lines.....	238C	148
Table 239-1.	Clearance of Open Vertical and Lateral Conductors.....	239E1	153
Table 239-2.	Clearance Between Open Vertical Conductors and Pole Surface	239E2a(1)	154
Table 242-1.	Grades of Construction for Supply Conductors Alone, at Crossing, or on the Same Structures With Other Conductors.....	242	157
Table 242-2.	Grades of Construction for Communication Conductors Alone, or in Upper Position of Crossing or on Joint Poles	242	159
Table 250-1.	Ice, Wind, and Temperature	250C	162
Table 250-2.	Velocity Pressure Exposure Coefficient k_z , Structure and Wire	250C	163
Table 250-3.	Structure and Wire Gust Response Factors, G_{RF}	250C	164
Table 251-1.	Temperatures and Constants	251B3	170
Table 253-1.	Overload Factors for Structures, Crossarms, Support Hardware, Guys, Foundation, and Anchors to Be Used with the Strength Factors of Table 261-1A	253	173
Table 253-2.	Alternate Overload Factors for Wood and Reinforced (Not Prestressed) Concrete Structures to Be Used with the Strength Factors of Table 261-1B	253	174
Table 261-1A.	Strength Factors for Structures, Crossarms, Support Hardware, Guys, Foundations, and Anchors for Use with Overload Factors of Table 253-1	261M	182
Table 261-1B.	Strength Factors for Structures and Crossarms for Use with Overload Factor of Table 253-2	261D2	182
Table 261-2.	Dimensions of Crossarm Cross Section of Select Southern Pine and Douglas Fir	261D2	183

Contents

Table 263-1.	Sizes for Grade N Supply Line Conductors (AWG for Copper and Aluminum, Stl WG for Steel).....	263D1	184
Table 263-2.	Sizes of Service Drops of 750 V or Less	263E1a(1)	185
Table 273-1.	Insulation Level Requirements	273	188
Table 341-1.	Clearance Between Supply and Communications Facilities in Joint-Use Manholes and Vaults	341B2b(5)	202
Table 352-1.	Supply Cable or Conductor Burial Depth	352D2	206
Table 431-1.	Overhead Supply Lines and Equipment Minimum Approach Distances to Exposed Energized Parts	431	225
Table 441-1.	AC Live Work Minimum Approach Distance	441A4	228
Table 441-2.	AC Live Work Minimum Approach Distance With Transient Overvoltage Factor.....	441A4	229
Table 441-3.	AC Live Work Minimum Approach Distance With Transient Overvoltage Factor.....	441A4	231
Table 441-4.	DC Live Work Minimum Approach Distance With Transient Overvoltage Factor.....	441A1	233
Table 441-5.	Altitude Correction Factor	441A4	234
Table 441-6.	Maximum Use Voltage for Rubber Insulating Equipment	441A4	234

Appendix A Uniform System of Clearances Adopted in the 1990 Edition

Introduction	243
The 1990 Changes	243
Clearance Rules and Tables Prior to 1990	249
Clearance Values Prior to 1990	253
Summary—Prior Editions	253
Clearances Subcommittee Activities	253
Summary	253

Appendix B Bibliography 254

APPENDIX FIGURES

Figure A1. Clearance at Maximum Sag	248
Figure A2. Basic Clearance	250
Figure A3. Additional Clearance Required for High-Temperature Operation	251
Figure A4. Additional Clearance Required for Long-Span Construction	252

APPENDIX TABLES

Table A-1.	245
Table A-2a. Reference Components of Rule 232	246
Table A-2b. Reference Components of Rule 234	247

Index	257
Revision Procedures	279
Form for Change Proposal	281
Time Schedule	282
Working Group Assignments	283
Tentative Interim Amendments	286

Letter Symbols for Units

This code uses standard symbols for units. They have the following meanings:

A	ampere
C	degree Celsius
ft	foot
ft ²	square foot
ft ³	cubic foot
F	degree Fahrenheit
g	gram
Hz	hertz
h	hour
in	inch
in ²	square inch
k	kilo (10 ³)
kg	kilogram
kPa	kilo pascal
km ²	square kilometer
kV	kilovolt (1000 volts)
kVA	kilovoltampere
kW	kilowatt
m	meter
m ²	square meter
m ³	cubic meter
m	milli (10 ⁻³)
mA	milliampere
mi	mile (statute)
mm	millimeter
min	minute (time)
N	newton
Pa	pascal
lb	pound
s	second (time)
V	volt
W	watt

Section 1. Introduction to the National Electrical Safety Code®

010. Purpose

The purpose of these rules is the practical safeguarding of persons during the installation, operation, or maintenance of electric supply and communication lines and associated equipment.

These rules contain the basic provisions that are considered necessary for the safety of employees and the public under the specified conditions. This code is not intended as a design specification or as an instruction manual.

011. Scope

- A. These rules cover supply and communication lines, equipment, and associated work practices employed by a public or private electric supply, communications, railway, or similar utility in the exercise of its function as a utility. They cover similar systems under the control of qualified persons, such as those associated with an industrial complex or utility interactive system.
- B. The NESC covers utility facilities and functions up to the service point.
NOTE: The National Electrical Code® (NEC®), NFPA 70-1999¹ covers utilization wiring requirements beyond the service point.
- C. NESC rules cover street and area lights (supplied by underground or overhead conductors) under the exclusive control of utilities (including their authorized contractors) or other qualified persons (such as those associated with an industrial complex).
NOTE: Luminaires not under such exclusive control are governed by the requirements of the NEC.
- D. NESC rules do not cover installations in mines, ships, railway rolling equipment, aircraft, or automotive equipment, or utilization wiring except as covered in Parts 1 and 3.

012. General Rules

- A. All electric supply and communication lines and equipment shall be designed, constructed, operated, and maintained to meet the requirements of these rules.
- B. The utilities, authorized contractors, or other entities, as applicable, performing design, construction, operation, or maintenance tasks for electric supply or communication lines or equipment covered by this code shall be responsible for meeting applicable requirements.
- C. For all particulars not specified in these rules, construction and maintenance should be done in accordance with accepted good practice for the given local conditions known at the time by those responsible for the construction or maintenance of the communication or supply lines and equipment.

013. Application

- A. New Installations and Extensions
 - 1. These rules shall apply to all new installations and extensions, except that they may be waived or modified by the administrative authority. When so waived or modified, safety shall be provided in other ways.
EXAMPLE: Alternative working methods, such as the use of barricades, guards, or other electrical protective equipment, may be implemented along with appropriate alternative working clearances as a means of providing safety when working near energized conductors.

¹Information on references can be found in Section 3.