National Electrical Safety Code®

Interpretation

Section 1.
Introduction to the National Electrical Safety Code

Rule 013B3 Application, Existing installations (2007 Edition, page 2) (26 March 2009) IR548

Discussion: NESC Rule 013.B(3) states that:

> Where conductors or equipment are added, altered, or replaced on an existing structure, ***the structure or the facilities on the structure*** need not be modified or replaced if the resulting installation will be in compliance with either (a) the rules that were in effect at the time of the original installation, or (b) the rules in effect in a subsequent edition of the NESC to which the installation has been previously brought into compliance, or (c) the rules of the current NESC edition. (Emphasis added).

Question (1): If a company proposes to add new "conductors or equipment" "on an existing structure" (i.e., in this case the "existing structure" is a wooden utility company electric distribution and telecommunications pole), and if at that point in time the existing structure and the existing facilities on the structure DO NOT meet ANY of the requirements in subsection (a) or (b) or (c) above, then must the entire existing structure and all of the existing facilities on that structure first be made compliant with the applicable requirements of the NESC code BEFORE the proposed new "conductors or equipment" can be added to the structure?

Question (2): Does the response to this request for an interpretation depend on whether or not the proposed new equipment or conductor can be installed, in and of itself, in accordance with the requirements of subsection (a), (b), or (c) above even if the surrounding structure is non-compliant?

Our utility believes that the text and meaning of Section 13(B)(3) are very clear concerning Questions (1) and (2) above, but the utility is requesting confirmation of its interpretation from the NESC.

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The answer to both questions is 'Yes.' As soon as a line/facility is found to be in noncompliance with the code, it is to be corrected according to Rules 214A4 and 214A5. Rule 214A4 requires defects discovered to be not in compliance with the rules that are not immediately threatening to life or property to be recorded and scheduled for correction. Rule 214A5 requires defects which could endanger life or property to be promptly repaired before any new work is done or new facilities are added. Rule 013B3 also works in concert with Rule 230I, which requires maintaining clearances and spacings to meet the rules under the conditions specified in the applicable edition. The term "resulting installation" is intentionally used in Rule 013B3 to cause a review of the entire installation at the time of work or inspection, not just the proposed addition, replacement or alteration.

If adding a new item, replacing an existing item, or rearranging existing items would not, in itself, either (1) create a structural, clearance, or grounding non-conformance; or (2) worsen an existing nonconformance, then the addition, replacement or alteration can be performed, but the other corrective work must be scheduled and accomplished under Rules 214A4 and A5. Of course, if the noncompliance in the existing installation is due to a structural limitation, then no additions may be made until this structural limitation is corrected.

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