



SPECIFIC INFORMATION FOR ELECTRICAL WORK INSTALLERS

This handout is intended to be a **general overview** of residential electrical requirements as noted in the 2016 California Electrical Code. This handout is not all inclusive and may not be helpful to a homeowner who is unfamiliar with electrical terminology. Additional information and knowledge is needed to properly install electrical wiring that is essentially free from fire and electric shock hazard. For complete information and assistance, please refer to authoritative publications based on the 2016 California Electrical Code.

It is illegal for an owner to install electrical wiring in mobile home or recreational vehicle parks, or on property that is rented, leased, or occupied by others.

A rough-in inspection must be made before insulation, sheet-rock, paneling, or other materials cover any electrical wiring. Underground wiring must be inspected before the trench is back-filled. Where wiring is concealed before inspection, the person responsible for concealing the wiring shall be responsible for all costs resulting from uncovering and replacing the covering material. Except for the final connection to switches, receptacles, and lighting fixtures, all ground wires and other wires in boxes must be spliced and pigtailed for the rough-in inspection.

The installer shall schedule a final inspection when the electrical work is completed prior to the wiring being utilized and the space occupied.

GENERAL CIRCUIT REQUIREMENTS

CEC 406.4(A) Receptacle outlets shall be of the grounding type, be grounded, and have proper polarity.

CEC 406.12 & 406.4(D)(5) All 125-volt, 15- and 20- amp receptacles installed or replaced in dwelling units shall be listed **tamper-resistant**. This includes receptacles installed outdoors, in basements and in garages.

CEC 406.9(B)(1) & 406.4(D)(6) New receptacles installed in wet locations and existing receptacles in wet locations that are being replaced shall be listed as **weather-resistant** type & have an in-use weatherproof (bubble) covers installed.

CEC 210.52(E)(1) & 406.9(A)&(B) At least one GFCI protected, **weather resistant** receptacle accessible at grade level shall be installed at the front and back of a dwelling, and shall have a cover that is weatherproof whether or not an attachment plug cap is inserted.

CEC 210.52(E)(3) Balconies, decks and porches, regardless of size, that are accessible from inside a dwelling unit shall have at least one receptacle installed within the perimeter.

CEC 210.12(A) All branch circuits supplying 125-volt, 15 and 20 ampere outlets in dwelling unit family rooms, kitchens, laundry rooms, dining rooms, living rooms, parlors, libraries, dens, bedrooms, sunrooms, recreation rooms, closets, hallways, or similar areas shall be protected by a listed **arc-fault circuit interrupter, (AFCI) combination type**, installed to provide protection of the branch circuit.

CEC 210.12(B) In **any** of the areas specified above where branch circuit wiring is **modified, replaced, or extended**, the branch circuit shall be protected by a listed **arc-fault circuit interrupter, (AFCI) combination type** protective device.



GENERAL CIRCUIT REQUIREMENTS (continued)

CEC 210.11(C)(1)(2)&(3) and 422.12 In addition to the branch circuits installed to supply general illumination and receptacle outlets in dwelling units, the following minimum requirements apply:

- Two 20-amp circuits for the kitchen receptacles
- One 20-amp circuit for the laundry receptacles
- One 20-amp circuit for the bathroom receptacles
- An individual branch circuit for central heating equipment

CEC 210.11(C)(1) Receptacles installed in the kitchen to serve countertop surfaces shall be supplied by not less than two separate small appliance branch circuits.

CEC 210.52(C)(1) At kitchen countertops, receptacle outlets shall be installed so that no point along the wall line is more than 24-inches measured horizontally from a receptacle outlet in that space. Countertop spaces separated by range tops, sinks or refrigerators are separate spaces.

CEC 210.52(C)1-5 A receptacle outlet shall be installed at each counter space 12-inches or wider and at each island counter or peninsular space greater than 24-inches by 12-inches. Receptacles shall be located not more than 20-inches above the countertop, or not more than 12-inches below the countertop and must not be located below a countertop overhang greater than 6 inches.

CEC 210.52(D) At least one receptacle outlet shall be installed in bathrooms within in 3-feet of the outside edge of each basin and must be located adjacent to the basin, if receptacle is located on wall or cabinet it cannot be located more than 12-inches below counter or pedestal top.

CEC 210.52(A)1-4 Receptacle outlets in habitable rooms shall be installed so that no point measured horizontally along the floor line in any wall space is more than 6-feet from a receptacle outlet. A receptacle shall be installed in each wall space 2-feet or more in width.

CEC 210.52(H) A hallway of 10-feet or more in length shall have at least one receptacle outlet.

CEC 210.52(I) All foyers with an area of 60 sq feet or greater shall have a receptacle(s) outlet located in each wall space of 3-feet or more in width.

CEC 210.52(G) At least one receptacle outlet, in addition to those for specific equipment, shall be installed in each accessory building that is supplied with electric power.

CEC 240.4 Conductors shall be protected in accordance with their ampacity per Table 310.15(B)(16) and 240.4(A-G)

TABLE 310.15(B)(16)

Fuse or Circuit Breaker Size	Minimum Wire Size	
	Copper	Aluminum
15 amp	14	N/A
20 amp	12	N/A
30 amp	10	8
40 amp	8	6
50 amp	6	4

Note: Conductors that supply motors, air-conditioning units, and other equipment may have overcurrent protection that exceeds the above limitation



GENERAL CIRCUIT REQUIREMENTS (continued)

CEC 300.3(B) All conductors of the same circuit, including grounding and bonding conductors shall be contained in the same raceway, cable, or trench.

CEC 210.4(B) Each multiwire (2 hot conductors and one white all in same cable) branch circuits shall be provided with a 2 pole breaker or listed handle ties that will simultaneously disconnect both ungrounded (hot) conductors.

CEC 408.4(A) Every circuit and circuit modification shall be legibly identified as to its clear, evident and specific purpose or use in sufficient detail on a directory located on the face or inside of the electrical panel doors.

GROUND-FAULT CIRCUIT-INTERRUPTER PROTECTION

CEC 210.8(A)1-8 Ground-fault circuit-interrupter (GFCI) protection shall be provided for all 125-volt, 15 and 20 amp receptacle outlets installed outdoors, in boathouses, garages, accessory buildings, crawl spaces at or below grade level, unfinished basements, bathrooms, at kitchen countertops and within 6' of the outside edge of **all** other sinks. The reset/test button for all GFCI protected circuits shall be installed in a **Readily Accessible Location**.

CEC 680.71 A hydro-massage (whirlpool) bathtub with a re-circulating piping system, designed to discharge water upon each use shall be supplied by an individual branch circuit and shall have ground-fault circuit-interrupter protection. *Note: often these units require 2 individual circuits, one for the pump and one for the in-line water heater.* All 125-volt receptacles not exceeding 30 amperes installed within 6 feet of the inside walls of a hydromassage bathtub shall be GFCI protected.

CEC 680.73 Hydromassage bathtub equipment shall be **readily accessible** without damaging the building structure or finish. When cord connected and accessible through an access panel, the receptacle shall be within 1-foot of the opening and shall face the opening.

CEC 680.21(C) All 15- and 20-amp, single-phase, 125 volt through 240-volt pool pump motors, whether cord connected or direct wired, shall be provided with GFCI protection.

An equipotential bonding grid to mitigate step and touch voltage potential shall be installed at outdoor swimming pools, spas and hot tubs, livestock areas, and at electrical equipment installed outdoors adjacent to natural and artificially made bodies of water.

WIRING METHODS

CEC 314.23(A)-(D) All electrical boxes shall be rigidly secured to the building structure.

CEC 314.27(C) Boxes used as the sole support for a ceiling-suspended paddle fan shall be listed and not be used as sole support for fans weighing more than 70 lbs. Where spare conductors are installed to a location acceptable to a ceiling fan, a listed fan box shall be installed.

CEC 334.30 Type NM (nonmetallic) cables shall be secured every 4.5 feet and within 12 inch of every outlet box, junction box, cabinet or fitting.

CEC 314.17(B)&(C) The outer jacket of type NM cable shall be secured to the box and extend into the box at least ¼ inch.

CEC 300.14 The minimum length of conductors, including grounding conductors, at all boxes shall be 6 inches and extend at least 3 inches outside the box.



WIRING METHODS (continued)

CEC 300.4 (A) & (B) Cables and raceways shall be protected from damage. Where installed through bored holes in wood framing members, the holes shall be bored so that the edge of the hole is not less than 1¼ inch from the nearest edge of the wood member, or shall be protected by a 1/16 inch steel plate.

NOTE: Local building codes will help you determine where holes or notches may be safely made in joists.

CEC 300.22 Type NM cable shall not be installed in plenum spaces (cold air returns), but in dwelling units may be installed perpendicular through joist or stud spaces used as such.

CEC 110.14(A) Only one conductor shall be installed under a terminal screw. In boxes with more than one grounding wire, the grounding wires shall be tied together with a “pigtail” attached to the grounding terminal of the device.

CEC 200.7(C) Where permanently re-identified at each location where it is visible and accessible, the conductor with white colored insulation in type **NM cable** may be used as an ungrounded (hot) conductor.

CEC 250.134 All electrical equipment, including raceways, metal boxes and equipment shall be connected to an equipment grounding conductor.

CEC 110.12(A) Unused openings in boxes shall be effectively closed. A non-metallic box shall be replaced if cable openings are punched but not used. No tape shall be used to close unused openings.

CEC 408.41 Each grounded (white) circuit conductor within a panelboard shall terminate in an individual terminal.

CEC 404.2(C) The grounded (white) conductor of lighting circuits shall be provided at each switch location, unless the wiring is installed in a raceway or the switch box remains accessible.

CEC 314.29 Junction boxes shall be installed so that the wiring contained in them can be rendered accessible without removing any part of the building.

CEC 314.16 The number of conductors and devices contained within electrical boxes determine the cubic inch size of box needed. Nonmetallic boxes are marked with their cubic inch capacity.

NEC 314.16 Minimum Size Of Outlet Boxes

	Conductor Size	
	14 AWG	12 AWG
Each insulated wire	2 in ³	2.25 in ³
All ground wires (combined)	2 in ³	2.25 in ³
Each device (switch/receptacle)	4 in ³	4.4 in ³
All internal cable clamps	2 in ³	2.25 in ³

Example: a box with Four 14/2 w/ground type NMB cables:

8 insulated wires	= 16 cubic inches
All ground wires	= 2 cubic inches
1 switch	= 4 cubic inches
1 receptacle	= 4 cubic inches
All cable clamps (combined)	= 2 cubic inches
Minimum Box Volume	= 28 cubic inches



The California Energy Code requires that all penetrations through an air barrier be sealed. Sealing applies to all penetrations including the service entrance, conduit, cables, panels, recessed luminaires, and electrical boxes.

LUMINAIRES (LIGHT FIXTURES)

CEC 410.16(A)(C) Luminaires (lighting fixtures) installed in clothes closets shall have the following minimum clearances from the defined storage area:

- 12 inches for totally enclosed surface incandescent or LED luminaires
- 6 inches for recessed totally enclosed incandescent, fluorescent or LED luminaires
- 6 inches for surface-mounted or recessed fluorescent luminaires
- Surface-mounted fluorescent or LED luminaires listed for installation in storage space shall be permitted

CEC 410.2 Closet storage space is the area bounded by the sides and back closet walls extending from the closet floor to a height of 6-feet' or the highest clothes-hanging rod and then out 24-inches from the sides and back of the closet walls respectively, and then continuing from there to the ceiling at a distance of 12-inches or the shelf width, whichever is greater.

CEC 410.16(B) Incandescent luminaires with **open or partially enclosed lamps** and pendant fixtures or lamp-holders are **not permitted** in clothes closets.

CEC 410.10(A) Luminaires installed in wet or damp locations shall be marked as suitable for use in wet or damp locations, correspondingly.

EQUIPMENT LISTING AND LABELING

CEC 110.3(B) All electrical equipment shall be installed and used in accordance with the listing requirements and manufacturer's instructions.

ELECTRICAL SERVICES

CEC 310.15 (B)(7) TABLE

CONDUCTOR SIZES FOR 120/240 VOLT 3-WIRE, SINGLE-PHASE, DWELLING SERVICES AND FEEDERS

Copper	Aluminum	Service Rating
4 AWG	2AWG	100 amps
1AWG	2/0	150 amps
2/0	4/0	200 amps
400 kcmil	600 kcmil	400 amps

CEC 230.70(A) The service disconnecting means shall be installed at a readily accessible location either outside a building or structure or inside nearest the point of entrance of the service-entrance conductors.

CEC 230.70(B) The main breaker in the Service panel shall be permanently marked as the "**Service Disconnect**"

CEC 230.70(A)(1) Service disconnecting means & all electrical panels shall be readily accessible and shall not be located in bathrooms.

CEC 240.24(D) Overcurrent devices (electrical panels) shall not be located in the vicinity of easily ignitable materials such as clothes closets.



ELECTRICAL SERVICES (continued)

CEC 110.14 Conductors of dissimilar metals shall not be intermixed unless the device is identified for the purpose. Listed anti-oxidant compound shall be used on all aluminum conductor terminations, unless the device manufacturer states that it is not required.

CEC 300.7(A) Portions of raceways or sleeves subject to different temperatures (i.e. passing from the interior to the exterior of a building) shall be sealed with an approved material to prevent condensation from entering equipment.

CEC 230.54(G) Service entrance raceways shall be rain tight and arranged to drain.

CEC 300.9 The interior of raceways installed in wet locations above grade shall be considered wet locations and the wire type installed shall comply with **NEC 310.10(C)** (type NM (romex) cannot be used in conduit attached to outside of a building).

CEC 300.4(G) Where raceways containing ungrounded conductors No. 4 or larger enter a cabinet, box, or enclosure; the conductors shall be protected by a bushing providing a smoothly rounded insulating surface.

CEC 408.36(D) Plug-in type overcurrent devices that are back-fed shall be secured by an additional approved device.

CEC 110.26 Sufficient working space shall be provided around electrical equipment. The depth of that space in the direction of access to live parts shall be a minimum of 3-feet. The minimum width of that space in front of electrical equipment shall be the width of the equipment or 30 inches whichever is greater. This workspace shall be clear and extend from the floor to a height of 6.5'. This space shall not be used for storage.

CEC 110.26(D) Illumination shall be provided for all working spaces about service equipment and panelboards.

GROUNDING AND BONDING

CEC 250.32(A) Buildings supplied by a branch circuit or feeder shall have an equipment grounding conductor run with the supply conductors and connected to the grounding electrode system at the separate building.

CEC 250.50 All grounding electrodes that are present at each building or structure served shall be bonded together to form the grounding electrode system.

CEC 250.52 Electrodes include a metal underground water pipe in direct contact with earth for 10 feet or more, a metal frame of a building or structure, a concrete encased electrode, ground rod, or a ground ring.

CEC 250.53(D)(2) A metal underground water pipe shall be supplemented by an additional electrode, such as a concrete encased electrode, ground rod, pipe or plate electrode.

CEC 250.53(A)(2) If a ground rod is installed as part of the grounding electrode system it shall be supplemented by an additional ground rod, spaced at least 6 feet apart, unless the single ground rod has a documented resistance to ground of 25 ohms or less. *Note: many rod manufactures require their rods to be driven twice the distance apart as length of the rod.*

CEC 250.64(C) The grounding electrode conductor shall be continuous, securely fastened and protected from physical damage.

CEC 250.104(A) & (B) The interior metal water piping and other metal piping (including gas piping) that may become energized shall be bonded to the service equipment with a bonding jumper sized the same as the grounding electrode conductor.



GROUNDING AND BONDING (continued)

CEC TABLE 250.66 The size of the grounding electrode conductor shall be determined by the size of the service-entrance conductors, per the chart:

Equivalent Size of Service Entrance Conductor		Size of the Grounding Electrode Conductor	
Copper	Aluminum	Copper	Aluminum
4 AWG	2	8*	6
1 AWG	2/0	6	4
2/0 or 3/0	4/0 or 250	4	2

CEC 250.28 A main bonding jumper or the green bonding screw provided by the panel manufacturer shall be installed in the service panel.

CEC 250.94 An intersystem bonding termination for the bonding of other systems such as telephone, cable TV, satellite system, etc. must be provided at all new and updated electrical services

UNDERGROUND WIRING

NEC 300.5 Direct buried cable or conduit or other raceways shall meet the following minimum cover requirements:

Direct Burial Cable	Rigid or Intermediate Metal Conduit	Non-Metallic Raceway (PVC)
24 inches	6 inches	18 inches
Residential branch circuits rated 20 amps or less at 120 volts or less and with GFCI protection at their source are allowed a minimum cover of 12 inches		

NOTE: This table does not apply to underground wiring at outdoor pools, spas, or hot tubs see NEC Article 680

NOTE: Residential branch circuits rated 20 amps or less at 120 volts or less and with GFCI protection at their source are allowed a minimum cover of 12 inches.

CEC 680.10 Underground wiring is not permitted under pools or within 5-feet horizontally from the walls of the pool, unless supplying permitted pool equipment.

CEC 300.5(D)(3) Underground service laterals shall have their location identified by a warning ribbon placed in the trench at least 12" above the underground installation.

CEC 300.5(J) Where subject to ground movement, direct buried cables and raceways shall be installed with expansion capability to prevent damage to the enclosed conductors or to the connected equipment.

CEC 110.14(B) Wire splicing means for direct burial conductors shall be listed for such use.

CEC 300.5(D)(1) Conductors emerging from underground shall be installed in rigid metal conduit, intermediate metal conduit, or Schedule 80 rigid nonmetallic conduit from 18" below grade or the minimum cover distance to the point of termination above ground. The bottom of the pipe shall be protected by a bushing or other effective means.