

## ADMINISTRATIVE CODE PROVISIONS RELATING TO ELECTRICAL CONSTRUCTION

In the last issue of this publication I discussed the Wisconsin Statutes governing electrical contractors and electricians. In this issue of the publication I want to discuss Chapter Comm 16, Electrical. These rules have been promulgated by the Department of Commerce.

First, a brief explanation of the legal status of administrative rules in Wisconsin. Many decades ago the Wisconsin legislature created Chapter 227 of the Wisconsin Statutes which defines the administrative rule making procedure of the various state agencies. Such state agency is created by statute and falls within the jurisdiction of the first branch of government which is the executive branch, headed by the governor. When the legislature creates an agency and empowers it to perform specified public duties, the agency then becomes part of the first branch of government and each agency promulgates administrative rules in order to give the public notice of the enforcement of the laws pertaining to its jurisdiction.

Comm 16, promulgated by the Department of Commerce, covers the installation of electrical and communication conductors and equipment in places of employment within public and private buildings or other structures, installation of conductors in equipment that connect to the supply of electricity, installation of outside conductors in equipment on the premises, installations of optical fiber cable, installations in buildings used by the electric utility and inspections of electrical construction of farms, public buildings and places of employment. Comm16 does not cover installations of electric conductors in equipment in ships, water craft or floating buildings, railroads, aircraft or automotive vehicles, other than mobile homes and recreational vehicles, nor does it cover installations of electric conductors in equipment for generation, transformation or distribution of power used exclusively by railroads, or installations

of communication equipment used exclusively by communication utilities, or installations including associated lighting under exclusive control of electric utilities for the purpose of communications, metering, generation, control, transformation, transmission or distribution of electric energy.

Comm 16.04 states that the Department of Commerce shall have the authority and responsibility for interpreting this chapter of the administrative rules and the National Electrical Code. The rule also authorizes municipalities to exercise jurisdiction over inspection of electrical construction covered by Comm 16, Wis. Ad. Code. Any municipal order which may conflict with a provision of Comm 16 may be the subject of a petition to the Department of Commerce for a hearing on the grounds that the local order is unreasonable and in conflict with Comm 16.

Comm 16.08 provides that all electrical power and communication equipment and lines shall be constructed, installed, operated and maintained so as to minimize hazards to life and property, and that all electrical installations shall conform to the National Electrical Code. Provisions are found in Comm 16 covering inspection and maintenance of public buildings and places of employment. The entire National Electrical Code is adopted as part of Comm 16 by reference. When changes, additions or omissions to the National Electrical Code occur, they become rules of the Department of Commerce.

Comm16 includes separate articles covering definitions; requirements for electrical installations; branch circuits; branch-circuit, feeder, and service calculations; outside branch circuits and feeders; services; grounding and bonding; wiring methods; conductors for general wiring; cabinets, cutout boxes and meter socket enclosures; outlet, device, pull and junction

boxes; conduit bodies; fittings; and manhole enclosures; nonmetallic-sheathed cable: Types NM, NMC, and NMS; electrical metallic tubing: Type EMT; flexible cords and cables; motors, motor circuits, and controllers; transformers and transformer vaults; commercial garages, repair and storage; agricultural buildings; elevators, dumbwaiters, escalators, moving walks, wheelchair lifts, and stairway chair lifts; electrically driven or controlled irrigation machines; emergency systems; legally required standby systems; and electrical inspection.

Every electrical contractor should have a copy of the current Comm 16 published by the Wisconsin Department of Commerce. I will be happy to provide any NECA member with further information regarding either the Wisconsin Statutes reviewed in the last publication or the administrative rule provisions reviewed in this publication.