



Oregon

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Public Utility Commission

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To: All Electric Supply and Communication Operators in Oregon

Re: Revised information regarding the minimum clearance between facilities on service poles

An issue was raised by several representatives of Oregon operators, both communications and electric supply, around the minimum vertical clearance required between communication and electric supply facilities where they attach to a dead end service pole. The code reference here is to the National Electrical Safety Code (NESC) Rule 235C1, Exception 3.

OPUC Staff had been relying on a 1985 interpretation from the IEEE National Committee that stated that the 12" clearance exception applied only to a building being served, and all poles required the standard vertical clearances (of 40").

We were made aware of a code change for the 1993 edition of that same exception to Rule 235C1. The change proposal found in the preprint makes it clear that "structure being served" is to include a service pole where the services terminate. Hence, the NESC-required minimum vertical clearance may be reduced to 12" between electric supply and communication service drops when the specified conditions exist.

However, all operators should be aware that some electric operators have stated in their electric service requirements that they do require the 40" minimum vertical clearance. If those requirements exist and are clearly stated, they can be enforced. The rules contained in the NESC are intended to be viewed as minimum standards. Many operators have adopted more stringent standards, in order to ensure a safe environment for utility workers and the public.

If you have any questions regarding NESC rules, feel free to call me at the number below, or Jerry Murray at (503) 378-6626.

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