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LOCATION OF PANELBOARDS IN BUILDINGS

This Bulletin clarifies requirements of the Canadian Electrical Code, Part I (CEC) for location of service boxes, panelboards and similar serviceable electrical equipment in buildings.

BACKGROUND

The CEC contains various Rules which regulate the location of service boxes, panelboards and similar serviceable electrical equipment (control panels, motor control centers, fire alarm control units, etc.). For example: Rule 6-206(1) provides the installation requirements for service boxes, Rule 14-406 mandates "ready access" to control devices, Rule 26-402 governs the location of panelboards in dwelling units, The main criteria for these CEC requirements is the need to achieve an acceptable level of electrical and fire safety.

It is intended by the Code that the necessary electrical and fire safety conditions will be met if the electrical equipment is installed in accordance with the applicable Rules of the CEC and maintained in conformance with Rules 2-300 to 2-322.

Rule 2-312 specifically requires accessibility to panelboards for equipment maintenance. This Rule states that "passageways and working space around electrical equipment shall not be used for storage and shall be kept clear of obstruction and so arranged as to give authorized persons ready access to all parts requiring attention".

Traditionally, storage rooms (regardless of whether such a storage room is located in a dwelling unit or in any other part of a building) are not permitted to be used for the installation of service boxes, panelboards and similar electrical equipment. These storage rooms are considered "undesirable locations" under provisions of Rule 6-206(1) c, Rule 26-402, etc.

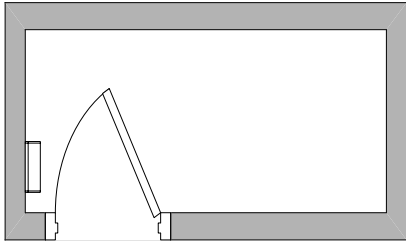
RULING

The installation of panelboards in storage rooms is not permitted.

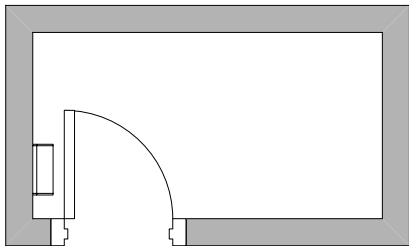
Exception: a panelboard and similar serviceable electrical equipment may be installed in a storage room when the panelboard is located without being obstructed by material or objects intended to be stored in the storage room.

Typical examples of an acceptable location of a panelboard in a storage room are shown below:

- a. Preferred location



- b. Alternate location choice (a warning label is to be provided at the panelboard, indicating that the door must be secured).



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