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Significant Changes to the 2023 National Electrical Code

The following is a summary of significant changes to the 2023 National Electrical Code as identified by NAHB. This list focuses on the changes which most affect home builders and does not include all of the changes that were approved.

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1. GFCIs for Kitchens – 210.8(A)
This change expands the requirement for GFCI-protected receptacles in kitchen. The requirement now applies to receptacles anywhere in the kitchen as well as in any area with a sink and permanent provisions for food preparation, beverage preparation, or cooking. This requirement previously was limited to kitchen receptacles serving the countertop surfaces.
2. GFCIs for Specific Appliances – 210.8(D)
This change expands the requirement for GFCI-protected branch circuits or outlets to include those serving electric ranges, wall-mounted ovens, counter-mounted cooking units, clothes dryers and microwave ovens, no matter where they are located. The list of appliances was previously found in Section 422.5(A) and included seven items.
3. GFCIs for Outdoor Outlets – 210.8(F)
This change removes the requirement for air conditioner condenser units and heat pumps to have GFCI protection. It should be noted that a similar change was also made to the 2020 edition through a Tentative Interim Amendment that went into effect September 2022. The requirement for GFCI was also expanded to include garages that have floors located at or below grade level, accessory buildings, and boathouses.
4. Garage Branch Circuits – 210.11(C)(4)
This change clarifies that additional branch circuits are permitted beyond the one supplying the required receptacle outlets in each vehicle bay. It also allows additional equipment to be supplied by the required circuit in garages with a single vehicle bay as long as the rating of such equipment does not exceed the limits of the branch-circuit ampere ratings.
5. 10-Ampere Branch Circuits – 210.23(A)
This change establishes a new section allowing 10-ampere branch circuits for lighting and exhaust fans. Certain loads are also prohibited, such as receptacle outlets, garage door openers and laundry equipment. The change addresses higher efficiencies in lighting and other equipment which result in lower electrical loads and may lead to oversizing circuit wiring and connected devices, such as circuit breakers. This change is one of several that are necessary to recognize 14 AWG copper-clad aluminum for branch circuit applications installed using a 10-ampere branch circuit.
6. Receptacles on Kitchen Islands and Peninsulas – 210.52(C)(2)
This change removes the requirement for providing receptacles to serve countertops and work surfaces on kitchen islands and peninsulas but requires undefined provisions for a future receptacle if none are provided. This section previously required one or more receptacles to serve islands and peninsulas based on their countertop area.
7. Kitchen Receptacle Outlet Location – 210.52(C)(3)
This change limits the location receptacle outlets in kitchens. They can be installed in, on, or above countertops and work surfaces. In addition to these locations, this section previously allowed receptacle outlets to be installed not more than 12 inches below the countertop or work surface. Prior to the 2020 NEC, this allowance only applied to construction for the physically impaired and on certain islands and peninsulas.

8. Load Calculations – 220.5(C)

This adds the requirement for the floor area of garages to be included when calculating the minimum lighting load for dwelling units. Note: The charging language is found in Section 220.41.

9. Surge-Protective Device Ratings – 230.67

This change adds the requirement for surge-protective devices (SPDs) to have a nominal discharge current rating of not less than 10kA. SPDs were added to the 2020 NEC, and no minimum rating was required.

10. Receptacles Installed Around Tub or Shower Spaces – 406.9(C)

This change clarifies that the zone restricting the location of receptacles around a tub or shower space does not include those spaces separated by a floor, wall, ceiling, room door, window, or fixed barrier. The 2020 NEC extended the zone 3 feet beyond the bathtub rim or shower stall threshold.