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Public Service with integrity

Electrical Work Exempt from Approval – Clarification

Building codes apply to most buildings or structures constructed within the State of Ohio. However, these same regulations include numerous exemptions to the code, such as agricultural buildings, federal buildings, floating docks, bungee jumping structures, or even miniature golf structures – see OBC/RCO §101. Additionally, OBC/RCO §102.10 contains numerous exclusions from approvals, including items such as playground equipment, fences, sidewalks, and driveways, among others.

This same concept also extends to specific electrical installations, with the guiding principle being its relationship to a building or structure. If the electrical work in question is connected to building services or is directly associated with a permitted building/structure, then approval and a permit would be necessary; however, if this same work is not connected to building services or is a stand-alone electric service with no association to a permitted building or structure, an approval or permit would not be required.

This exempted work would include items such as –

- Site lighting or parking lot lighting which are not connected to building services.
- Free-standing services not associated with a permitted building/structure.
- Electrical installations for manmade bodies of water, as defined by NEC 682, not connected to building services – i.e., retention ponds.
- Cable TV utility boxes.
- Temporary poles/pedestals.
- Electrical installations for Agricultural Buildings.
- Electrical installations for Ground Signs, 6' or less in height, which are not connected to building services.

When we encounter work of this nature, the applicant will be notified that a permit will not be required for the identified work. If, after notification, the applicant still wishes to obtain a permit, we'll be glad to complete that service.

It can be very challenging to navigate all these nuances. We encourage anyone with questions or concerns to contact our office before commencing any work.

3/31/22(amended 7/11/25)