



Electrical Codes and Standards

OSHA's **Subpart K—Electrical** addresses electrical safety requirements that are necessary for the practical safeguarding of employees involved in construction work. But, it doesn't stop there. There is also the National Electrical Code ANSI/NFPA 70-1984, which is the "How to" book for all electrical contractors, their employees, and all those construction workers who might be exposed to one or more electrical hazards.

OSHA's Subpart K addresses electrical safety requirements that are necessary for the practical safeguarding of employees involved in construction work and is divided into four major divisions and applicable definitions, as follows:

- (1) **Installation Safety Requirements** include such categories as electric equipment, and installations used to provide electric power and light on jobsites.
- (2) **Safety-Related Work Practices** cover hazards arising from the use of electricity at jobsites, also covering the hazards arising from the accidental contact, direct or indirect, by employees with all energized lines, above or below ground, passing through or near the jobsite.
- (3) **Safety-Related Maintenance and Environmental Considerations**, such as hazardous locations involving excess dust, ignition sparks, explosions, gases, fumes, vapors, liquids, etc.
- (4) **Safety Requirements for Special Equipment** such as batteries and battery charging procedures.

What are some important electrical "definitions?" Try these on for size, and you'll shortly see that electrical hazards are everywhere, waiting to reach out and trap you, big time:

- **Festoon lighting**—A string of outdoor lights suspended between two points more than 15 feet.
- **Grounding Conductor**—A system or circuit conductor that is intentionally grounded.
- **Ground-Fault Circuit Interrupter**—A device for the protection of personnel that functions to de-energize a circuit or portion thereof within an established period of time.
- **Qualified Person**—One familiar with the construction and operation of the equipment and the hazards involved.
- **Readily Accessible**—Capable of being reached quickly for operation, inspection, without requiring climbing over obstacles (or resorting to portable ladders, chairs, etc.).
- **Ventilated**—Provided with a means to permit circulation of air sufficient to remove an excess of heat, fumes, dust, or vapors.

These are only a very small portion of the over 100 "definitions" outlined in **OSHA's Subpart K- Electrical**. Those workers suspecting that there may be one or more

electrical hazards near their workstation should be extremely familiar with **all** “definitions” outlined in the OSHA standard.

*The scary thing about electricity is that you can't see it, smell it, taste it or even sense it. BUT, you **can feel** it. And when you feel it, it's too late. You'll probably either suffer major, major injury or die from electrocution.*