

National Electrical Safety Code Committee, Accredited Standards Committee C2

National Electrical Safety Code®

Interpretation

Section 23. Clearances

Rule 234 Table 234-1 Clearance of Wires, Conductors, Cables, and Equipment From Buildings, Bridges, Rail Cars, Swimming Pools, and Other Installations (2002 Edition, page 104) (3 June 2004) IR537

Are trees/vegetation considered “other installations,” in Table 234-1?

Discussion: Are trees considered obstructions, when determining minimum safe wire clearances?

Interpretation

The Interpretations Subcommittee has considered the subject Interpretation Request for Rule 234 and Table 234-1 and has developed a consensus report as follows:

“The answer to this question is no; trees/vegetation are not “other installations” as the term is used in Rule 234 and Table 234-1. Table 234-1 covers structures (buildings and similar items) that are constructed; neither the rule nor the table is intended to cover trees or vegetation that grows.

Rule 218 covers requirements for tree trimming. While the NOTE to Rule 218A1 provides guidance as to factors to be considered in determining the extent of trimming, conductor clearances are not specified. Similarly, conductor clearances to trees/vegetation are not specified elsewhere in the rules.

There is also a reference to obstructions in the discussion portion of this submittal. In general, trees/vegetation are not considered to be “obstructions” for clearance purposes, as discussed above. Supporting structure obstructions are covered in Rule 217A4; note that supporting structures should be kept free from climbing hazards, such as vines.”