

National Electrical Safety Code Committee, Accredited Standards Committee C2

National Electrical Safety Code®

Interpretation

Section 23. Clearances

Rule 230I, Maintenance of Clearances and Spacing (24 July 2002) IR529

This letter is written for the purpose of obtaining an interpretation of 230I dealing with the maintenance of clearances and spacing of overhead conductors.

It is stated that “the clearances and spacing required shall be maintained at the values and under the conditions specified in Section 23 of the applicable edition.”

My question, for which an interpretation is requested, is as follows:

Under abnormal conditions, when a wire is hanging low or on the ground due to: an out-of-control vehicle; a tree over the line; ice loading above design level; a conductor being burned down because of winds damaging signs, billboards, house trailers, tin roofs, metal siding, or other objects and being blown into the wires; or other events or activities above and beyond the design criteria of the NESC, is it a violation of NESC Rule 230I when the utility does not know the condition exists?

The clearances of Section 23 are not or cannot be maintained during the course of abnormal events such as facility damage due to out-of-control vehicles, tornado damage, or signs, billboards, trees, house trailers, tin roofs, metal siding, or other objects being blown into lines by storms or other events.

Interpretation

The Interpretations Subcommittee has considered the subject Interpretation Request and has developed a consensus report as follows:

“As you note in your request for interpretation, Rule 230I states: “The clearances and spacing required shall be maintained at the values and **under the conditions specified in Section 23 of the applicable edition.**” (Emphasis added).

Abnormal conditions resulting either from actions of others or from severe storms are not covered by Rule 230I. Application of this rule is limited to the conditions specified in Section 23 (of the applicable edition). Because the events listed in your request are beyond NESC criteria, abnormal conditions resulting from such events do not violate Rule 230I

Utilities are responsible for correcting non-compliant conditions—whatever the cause—when they have knowledge of such conditions.”