DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND INDUSTRY

Electrical code requirements for accessory dwelling units (ADU)

Also known as granny flats, accessory apartments, in-law suites, carriage houses, garden cottages, laneway houses, etc.

Question: Which code covers the wiring in an accessory dwelling unit?

Answer: The Minnesota State Building Code adopts and includes the National Electrical Code (NEC) in its entirety without amendment or deletion. The NEC covers the installation of all interior and exterior premises wiring.

Question: Which articles in the NEC pertain to accessory dwelling units?

Answer: Several articles in the NEC cover the requirements for dwelling units, including but not limited to Articles 100, 110, 200, 210, 220, 230, 240, 250, 300, 310, 314, 334 and numerous other articles.

Question: Is a licensed electrical contractor required to do the wiring in an accessory dwelling unit?

Answer: Yes. A licensed electrical contractor is required to perform all electrical work for accessory dwelling units. The licensed electrical contractor shall file an electrical permit and arrange for all required inspections.

Question: Is a separate electrical meter required for the accessory dwelling unit?

Answer: Generally, yes. Minnesota Statute 326B.106, Subd.12 requires each dwelling unit to be separately metered. A separately metered utility service may be required or in some cases an owner-metered sub-panel may meet the requirements.

Question: What are the rules related to the location of overcurrent devices (such as main, feeder and branch-circuit circuit breakers or fuses)?

Answer: The NEC requires that each occupant in a multifamily building shall have ready access to all overcurrent devices protecting the conductors that supply the dwelling unit in which the occupant resides. One option is to install all of the overcurrent devices at a common location that is readily accessible at all times to both the primary occupant and the accessory dwelling unit occupant.

Alternatively, all overcurrent devices for the primary occupancy could be located to only be available to the primary occupant, and all overcurrent devices for the accessory dwelling unit occupancy could be located to only be available to the accessory dwelling unit occupant. There are numerous configuration options.

Question: Are there other rules related to overcurrent devices that need to be considered?

Answer: Yes. Overcurrent devices shall not be located:

- Where they will be subject to physical damage
- In the vicinity of easily ignitable material, such as in clothes closets or confined storage spaces
- In bathrooms, where they are not accessible and may be subject to corrosion from damp and wet locations
- Over steps in a stairway, which creates a safety hazard

Question: Does the NEC require that branch circuits in a multifamily building be separated?

Answer: Yes. The NEC requires that branch circuits in each dwelling unit shall only supply loads within that particular dwelling unit, or directly associated with that particular dwelling unit. If there is a common area in the multifamily building the branch circuits supplying the common area shall not be supplied from panelboards that supply either the primary dwelling unit or accessory dwelling unit. This may require the installation of a separate panelboard dedicated for common area branch circuits. Each occupant shall have ready access to all overcurrent devices protecting the conductors supplying the common area.

Question: Are the existing branch circuits that are supplied from the primary dwelling unit permitted to stay in the accessory dwelling unit?

Answer: No. See Question No. 7. The primary unit's existing circuits, outlets, switches and so on shall be de-energized, abandoned, removed, blanked off or otherwise separated from the accessory dwelling unit.

Question: Can a detached accessory dwelling unit be sub-fed from the primary dwelling unit electric service?

Answer: Yes, if all NEC requirements are met and the accessory dwelling unit can be sub-metered. As noted in Question No. 5 above, each occupant shall have ready access to their overcurrent device(s).

Question: Would a larger capacity electric service be required if an internal, attached or detached accessory dwelling unit is added to the premises?

Answer: A load calculation in accordance with the NEC for both the existing primary unit and the accessory dwelling unit shall be submitted to the electrical inspector to determine the total calculated load on the existing service and whether or not a larger service is required.

Question: Are smoke detectors and carbon monoxide detectors required?

Answer: Yes. Refer to the applicable sections of the Minnesota Building Code and City of Minneapolis ordinances.

Question: Who is responsible for arranging the electrical inspection?

Answer: The licensed electrical contractor arranges for the electrical inspection. The names and phone numbers of the Minneapolis electrical inspectors are listed on the DLI website at dli.mn.gov.

Question: How much does an electrical permit cost?

Answer: The minimum fee for one inspection is $81, which includes:

- $25 permit fee
- $55 inspection fee
- $1 state surcharge

Additional fees will be assessed based on the type and quantity of electrical work performed. The full electrical inspection fee schedule is available on the DLI website: dli.mn.gov.