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Office of the State Fire Marshal - Engineering Division
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Structures v. Equipment

Code: 2017 Electrical Code
Section: Article 100 – Structure

Date: June 12, 2018

Note:

The intent of this interpretation is to clarify the definition of a structure solely within the context of the electrical code. The electrical code's definition of a structure shall not extend, apply, or modify the general or legal definition of a structure or where a structure is defined in other technical codes.

Question 1:

Does the electrical code consider a standby generator or a heat pump mounted on a stand a structure?

Answer 1:

No. The 2017 NEC has clarified the intent for the definition of a structure within the context of the electrical code. The new language states a structure is “[t]hat which is built or constructed, other than equipment.”

Article 100 of the NEC defines equipment as “[a] general term, including fittings, devices, appliances, luminaries, apparatus, machinery, and the like used as part of, or in connection with, an electrical installation.” Therefore, anything that solely is defined as equipment, does not meet the definition of a structure.

Question 2:

Does the electrical code consider the equipment stands structures?

Answer 2:

The stand is a “structure” per the broad language of the definition. However, if the stand is ancillary to the generator and its existence is for no other purpose, then such stands are not intended to be defined as a structure for purposes of applying the electrical code.

Additionally, a post or similar object that has a panel, receptacle, switch, septic pump controls, etc., that is mounted on the post or similar object is also not intended to be defined as a structure for purposes of applying the electrical code if the sole purpose of the post or similar object is only for affixing the electrical equipment.

Keywords:

structures, ground rods, generators, heat pumps, stands