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2011 National Electric Code Goes into Effect next Wednesday in Austin

Interpretation of Subcontractor Definition Still Being Discussed

January 27, 2012

The City of Austin will start enforcing the [2011 National Electric Code \(NEC\) with local amendments](#) starting next Wednesday, February 1. One issue that remains outstanding is a proposed local amendment to prohibit the use of trade subcontractors.

The HBA has been an active participant to define the “intent” of the definition of an electrical subcontractor. Last Wednesday, city staff gave the city’s Electric Board an update on the progress. The board asked staff to draft language for the “intent” of the definition of an electrical subcontractor. The city’s chief electrical inspector said he would not have a draft ready for about six weeks.

The subcontractor definition is the same as in the 2008 NEC.

Subcontractor: A person or company licensed as an electrical contractor who enters into an agreement with another contractor or owner to perform work on an electrical wiring system.

It is common practice for electrical contractors to “sub out” different phases of and electrical installation. However, a number of electrical firms, the union participants and some city electric inspectors want to outlaw that practice and require all workers on a site to be the employees of the electrician that obtains the building permit.

The HBA has opposed the city getting involved in individual employment arrangements so long as the master electrician remains the accountable party. The HBA wants to frame definition so it does not add extra cost (10%) to jobs).

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