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BULLETIN 80-5

Issued: September 1980 Revised: September 2019
Subject: Proper Utilization of Temporary Power Taps
Reference: N.J.A.C. 5:23-3.16, Electrical Subcode, Articles 110.3(B), 400 and 590

Temporary power taps rated 250 volts AC or less, and 20 amps or less, are approved assemblies consisting of a line fitting (connector), a length of flexible cord, and an enclosure in which are mounted one or more receptacles. Additionally, there may be switches, indicator lights, and overcurrent protection devices contained in the enclosure. All temporary power taps are required to be listed by a nationally recognized electrical testing laboratory and subject to this bulletin.

Utilization of temporary power taps must conform to the requirements of Article 400 of the Electrical Subcode for flexible cords. Temporary power taps are intended for indoor use as temporary multiple-outlet extensions of a branch circuit to a central location, and not intended for use at construction sites and similar locations. Electrical Subcode Article 590, Temporary Installations, which concerns itself with the wiring involved in construction, alteration, demolition, or maintenance, does not apply to the use of temporary power taps.

Article 400 of the Electrical Subcode specifically states that flexible cords shall not be used as a substitute for the fixed wiring of a structure. Restrictions for the use of temporary taps include:

1. Temporary power taps shall only be connected to an approved, fixed-receptacle outlet. Temporary power taps shall not be connected in series fashion, nor shall they be used in conjunction with extension cords.
2. Cords shall not be routed through doorways; routed through holes in floors, ceilings, or walls; or placed in a location where the cord would cause a tripping hazard, or where it would be subject to physical damage.
3. Cords shall not be attached to building surfaces. This shall prohibit the use of clips, raceways, or other means of attachment. Clips may be used on items described as furniture to prevent physical damage, or to eliminate a tripping hazard. In no case shall cords be concealed.

With the above criteria in mind, temporary power taps should only be used:

1. As an extension of a branch circuit to a central location for the purpose of supplying several portable appliances. This would include laboratory work tables, work stations involved with manufacturing processes, equipment carts for projection or test equipment, and similar functions.

2. In situations where a fixed wiring method would hamper the intended functional features of some piece of equipment. This would include utilization in conjunction with a piece of furniture and installation on desks, tables, or work stations found in open-office landscaping environments. Work stations are essentially furniture designed to allow for flexible office arrangement. A fixed wiring method would not be practical for this sort of installation. Temporary power taps are not allowed where partitions or walls are permanently attached to the building structure by bolts, clips, or other means.