

**DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT  
DIVISION OF CODES AND STANDARDS**

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**Information Bulletin #2005-08 (SHL, FBH)**

**To: City and County Building Officials  
Factory-Built Housing Manufacturers  
Third-Party Agencies  
Interested Parties (SHL) & (FBH)  
Division Staff**

**SUBJECT: Electrical Service Drops and Metering Equipment**

It has come to the attention of the Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) that some misunderstanding exists in the application of the California Electrical Code (CEC), Title 24, California Code of Regulations, Part 3, as it pertains to utility company-owned overhead electrical service drops and metering equipment to specified residential occupancies and buildings and structures accessory thereto.

HCD Information Bulletin SHL 89-04, issued February 27, 1989, provided HCD's and the California Public Utilities Commission's (CPUC) position that utility company-owned overhead service drops and metering equipment are regulated by the CPUC under General Order (G.O.) 95 and not the CEC. The purpose of this Information Bulletin is to reaffirm, and remind building departments of, this previously stated position.

The scoping provisions of the CEC, located in Section 89.3, state in relevant part that the CEC applies to electrical equipment, wiring and systems "except such electrical equipment, wiring and systems which are expressly exempted by Section 89.4." CEC section 89.4(E) exempts equipment and installations under the exclusive control of electrical utilities for the purpose of among other things, distribution of electrical energy etc. Additionally, CEC section 90.2(B)(5) states in part "This Code does not cover the following:.....(5) Installations under the exclusive control of an electric utility where such installations a. Consist of service drops or service laterals, and associated metering....." (Emphasis added)

An example of a conflict exists when applying the provisions of CEC section 680.8 to the clearance of utility company-owned overhead electrical service conductors above swimming pools, rather than the provisions of G.O. 95. The provisions of CEC sections

89.3, 89.4 and 90.2, as noted above, prohibit applying the provisions of Section 680.8, in this example, to utility company-owned overhead electrical service drops.

Utility company-owned overhead electrical service drops and metering equipment are specifically regulated through the CPUC's G.O. 95 for overhead electric line construction and are not subject to the provisions of the CEC. Additionally, underground electrical supply and communication systems also are specifically regulated by the CPUC through its General Order 128 (G.O. 128).

Please direct any comments or questions to the Department's State Housing Law Program at the address noted above, at (916) 445-9471, or by use of the Department's web comment at [www.hcd.ca.gov](http://www.hcd.ca.gov). For questions concerning the California Public Utility Commission's General Orders 95 and 128, please contact Julian Ajello, Utilities Safety Branch Chief, at (415) 703-1327 for assistance.

Kim Strange  
Deputy Director