With the 2020 National Electric Code, the National Fire Protection Association is looking to clarify the requirements for receptacles in meeting rooms — and that’s generating a lot of questions from specifying engineers, architects and building owners.

As Compliance Manager for Wiremold products at Legrand, North America, Mike Diamantoplos has the expertise to provide comprehensive answers.

Here is what you need to know about the new NEC provision on meeting rooms.
WHAT HAPPENED?

The 2020 Code was revised to provide clarification on the requirements for Meeting Rooms.

- The requirements previously found in Article 210.71 are now found in Article 210.65.
- The 2020 Code was revised to clearly convey that the requirements apply to meeting rooms with a floor dimension that is 12 feet or greater in any direction.
- The 2020 Code was revised to replace the term floor receptacle outlet with floor outlet. This change was implemented to clearly convey that either one floor receptacle or a floor outlet, such as a furniture feed floor box, serving receptacles in fixed furniture may be utilized to comply with Article 210.65.

WHY WAS THIS SECTION ADDED TO THE NEC?

The primary reason was to prevent potential hazards created by cords being strewn across floors in meeting rooms. Additionally, while many meeting rooms have receptacles, they previously were not mandatory. The new code ensures meeting rooms will have them.

WHO IS AFFECTED BY THE CHANGE?

As of October 1, 2019, 30 states have adopted the 2017 NEC. Currently, 12 other states are in the process of adopting the 2017 or 2020 NEC. It can take several years for a state to adopt NEC code changes, but they are continuously reviewing and evaluating to determine the best timeframe and method. It is important for designers and building owners to check the NEC adoption maps frequently from design to completion to ensure that their finished projects are in compliance with 210.65.

TO SEE THE LATEST CODE ADOPTION MAP, VISIT: www.nfpa.org/nec/nec-adoption-and-use/nec-adoptions-maps

HERE ARE THE KEY POINTS:

- The code applies to meeting rooms that are 1,000 square feet or less. That means auditoriums are not subject to 210.65.
- If the room can be divided by a movable partition, the receptacle provision applies to the smallest room of the partitioned area. For example, if an 1,800-square-foot meeting room can be separated into two 900-square-foot areas, both of those rooms are subject to this section.
- The total number of receptacle outlets include not only wall outlets, but also floor outlets and receptacle outlets in fixed furniture.
- The required number of receptacle outlets in fixed walls must be in accordance with 210.52(A)(1) through (A)(4). These receptacle outlet locations may be determined by the installer, building owners or designers.
- Any meeting room with a floor dimension that is 12 feet or greater in any direction and that has a floor area of at least 215 square feet needs at least one floor receptacle outlet or at least one floor outlet to serve receptacle(s) in fixed furniture. The floor outlet may be a standard receptacle or furniture feed. These floor outlets must be located no less than six feet from any fixed wall for each 215 square feet of floor space.
- The NEC defines an outlet as “A point on the wiring system at which current is taken to supply utilization equipment.”
- The NEC defines a receptacle as “A contact device installed at the outlet for the connection of an attachment plug, or for the direct connection of electrical utilization equipment designed to mate with the corresponding contact device.
- Receptacles must be non-locking and 125-volt, 15- and 20-ampere types.
WHAT ARE SOME SOLUTIONS?

Floor boxes and poke-thru devices are already popular with designers who want connections in the middle of rooms or under furniture rather than having people plug into walls behind them — if cords can even reach a wall. People designing and responsible for meeting rooms will also find these to be great solutions to comply with section 210.65.

The benefits of floor boxes and poke-thru devices include the following:

- They provide flexibility with their ability to be installed where they best serve a specific application.
- They blend into a room because they can be installed in a floor and come in a variety of finishes.
- They are easy to install.
- They can deliver power, data and audiovisual connections.

Legrand has a diverse line of poke-thru devices designed for polished concrete, carpet, wood, terrazzo and tile floor surfaces. Other features include multiple gangs, UL Listed and UL Fire Classified, and recessed devices that are compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Legrand floor boxes also can be installed in several types of floor surfaces and in on-grade and above-grade applications, and are UL Listed and Fire Classified. Some Legrand floor boxes have up to 10 gangs of capacity, plug load control of up to 30 feet, built-in cable management and other features.

In addition, retrofit projects present a perfect opportunity to explore overfloor raceway. This system installs over existing floor coverings and is both tamper-resistant and installer-friendly, making it an ideal solution for relocatable or permanent installations where access through floors and ceilings is not an option. It can also handle a wide range of capacity needs with four channels for a variety of power, data and audiovisual options.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT: legrand.us/wiremold

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