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210.8(B) Dwelling unit garage or other structure?

I will attempt to provide some clarification on how the state of Idaho enforces article 210.8(A) and (B) when it comes to detached shops and garages located on property with dwelling units.

Inspectors often encounter properties with dwelling units that contain buildings used for commercial, agricultural or industrial purposes. It is not uncommon to find an agricultural building used to work on tractors and store chemicals next to a dwelling unit. It is also not uncommon to find old barns being converted to assembly occupancies being rented for weddings and other activities. It is even more common to find a detached garage or shop being built as a commercial vehicle repair shop or for commercial cabinet manufacturing. The first thing that should be understood is that in these instances the homeowner cannot perform the work under a homeowner permit. An electrical contractor must permit and perform the installation.

The first thing an inspector and customer should do is determine the use of the detached garage/shop. The customer must identify the intended use of the garage/shop. Is it intended for commercial use? Are they running a commercial business out of it? Is it being used as a commercial auto repair shop, metal working, wood working shop or is it an assembly occupancy etc. The identified use of the structure and any classified location information must be documented in the permit notes. An inspector cannot identify a specific type of wiring method can be installed without knowing the intended use of the structure or what its classification is. If it is determined the structure is for commercial purposes the local building department may need contacted to determine the construction type. This will also help the inspector identify the required wiring methods.

If a detached garage/shop on residential property is associated with the dwelling unit; ie... it is being used by the occupants of the dwelling unit for non-commercial purposes the requirements of Article 210.8(A) would apply. The requirement for tamper resistant receptacles would also apply. This detached garage/shop is treated like it is attached to the dwelling unit. It does not matter if it is fed by its own service or a feeder. 310.15(B)(7) does not apply to detached garages.

If a detached garage/shop on residential property is not associated with the dwelling unit; ie... it is being used for commercial, agricultural or industrial purposes such as an auto repair shop, metal work, wood work etc. Then article 210.8(B) would apply along with any other applicable codes.

If the inspector is told that the structure is being used for dwelling unit purposes, then it is discovered that the structure will be or is being used for other than dwelling unit purposes; the structure will be required to be wired in accordance with its actual use. Any time the use of a structure changes; codes that apply to the new use of the structure are required to be complied with. We have had situations where customers, in an attempt to save money, told the electrical

inspector, fire marshal and building officials that a structure was for personal use. Later it was discovered that the building was being used for wedding receptions for hundreds of people. Code enforcement agencies were forced to shut down the building and the customer was required to have the entire structure meet the correct codes. This was extremely costly to the owner.

So, the detached garage/shop will either be treated like an attached garage and all applicable codes for attached garages would apply. Or, it is treated as a “other than dwelling unit” and all applicable codes would apply.

Thank you,

Warren Wing

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