

**Santa Clara County
Planning Office and Building Inspection Office**

New Electrical Service - Requirement for Underground Installation

The installation of underground electrical service is mandated by the County Ordinance Code in the subdivision and single site ordinances (sections C12-53c and C12-325), and as a condition of approval of a use permit, architectural and site approval, building site approval and other land use approvals. New electrical service in the unincorporated area must be installed underground. An application to allow overhead installation is evaluated by the County Planning Office, after an inspection of the site is made by a Building Inspector or Land Development Engineer. Overhead installation may be granted for emergencies or unusual circumstances, subject to the following policies:

Criteria for Considering Aboveground Installation

In considering a request for above-ground installation, the following are evaluated: rocky or hilly terrain, vegetation and trees, geology, location of creeks and streams, or where the installation would be physically impossible or unreasonable. A neighbor having above-ground utilities is not a sole reason for granting a variance.

Cost of Underground Installation

Cost, by itself is not criteria for allowing aboveground service.

Urban Neighborhoods

In developed urban neighborhoods (Burbank, East San Jose, Rancho Rinconada, Cambrian Park, Los Altos, etc.), if the proposed house is on the pole side of the street, underground installation is required. If the proposed house is on the non-pole side of the street, aboveground installation will be evaluated, depending on the pole location and length and location of the underground installation. In general, underground installation is required in urban areas, since terrain, creeks and other physical factors are not a factor.

Wells

For agricultural wells, (usually on parcels over 5 acres) overhead service is generally allowed, but is evaluated on a case-by-case basis. For wells on approved parcels, especially those under 5 acres, underground installation is required.

Application

An application to allow overhead installation is required in order for the County to consider your request. Submit 2 copies of the site plan (to scale) showing the property, property lines, all existing and proposed structures, improvements, wells, existing and proposed utility pole locations, and the pole(s) proposed for overhead service. A portion of the application must be completed by a representative of PG&E, prior to submittal to the County. Also, submit a copy of the APN map, available on the 5th floor, from the County Assessor's Office. A fee is charged to process this application and evaluate the request.

For additional information, contact Building Inspection Office at (408) 299-5700 or Planning Office at (408) 299-5770.

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**REQUEST TO WAIVE UNDERGROUND ELECTRICAL INSTALLATION
AND ALLOW OVERHEAD ELECTRICAL INSTALLATION**

This section to be completed by owner:

Site Address: _____

APN: _____ Owner: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Telephone: home: _____ work: _____

Reason for Request: _____

This section to be completed by PG&E Representative:

Name: _____ Telephone: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Comments: _____

This section to be completed by Planning Office:

Planning file: _____ Scenic road Yes/No Approved Site: _____

This section to be completed by Building Inspector:

Are there reasons for granting an exemption to allow overhead installation? Yes/No

List reasons/site conditions which exist: _____

*The current fee, a copy of the APN map and 2 site plans must be submitted with this application. Property owner and PG&E will be notified of the decision.
See handout for additional information.*