



Planning, Development & Transportation Services
Community Development & Neighborhood Services

To: Building Code Stakeholders

From: Marcus Coldiron, CBO
Chief Building Official

Date: October 20th, 2023

File: National Electrical Code Interpretation

Title: Receptacle outlet location for island and peninsula countertops.

Code Edition: 2023 National Electrical Code (NEC)

Sections: Article 210.52 (C) (2)
210.52 (C) (3)

Purpose: To provide clarification on how and where receptacle outlets are required to be installed for island and peninsular countertops.

Code requirements:

210.52 (C) (2) Island and Peninsular Countertops and Work Surfaces.

Receptacle outlets, if installed to serve an island or peninsular countertop or work surface, shall be installed in accordance with 210.52 (C) (3). If a receptacle outlet is not provided to serve an island or peninsular countertop or work surface, provisions shall be provided at the island or peninsular for future addition of a receptacle outlet to serve the island or peninsular countertop or work surface.

210.52 (C) (3) Receptacle Outlet Location. Receptacle outlets shall be located in one or more of the following:

1. On or above, but not more than 500mm (20 in.) above, a countertop or work surface
2. In a countertop using receptacle outlet assemblies listed for use in countertops
3. In a work surface using receptacle outlet assemblies listed for use in work surfaces or listed for use in countertops



Planning, Development & Transportation Services
Community Development & Neighborhood Services

Receptacle outlets rendered not readily accessible by appliances fastened in place, appliance garages, sinks, or range tops as covered in 210.52 (C) (1), Exception No. 1, or appliances occupying assigned spaces shall not be considered as these required outlets.

Code interpretation:

This code section is a detour from the 2020 NEC, which required a specific number of receptacle outlets to be installed based on the square footage of the island served.

The changes presented in the 2023 NEC require provisions to be provided at the island or peninsula for the future addition of receptacle outlets. However, if receptacle outlets are installed to serve an island or peninsula, they must be installed in, on, or above the countertop or work surface.

The change does not allow receptacle outlets, serving the countertop or work surface to be installed on the sides of the island or peninsular, below the countertop or work surface. This recognizes that these receptacle outlet locations present a hazard to occupants using appliances on a countertop or work surface with the appliance cord hanging off the side and plugged into a receptacle outlet below the countertop.

Any receptacle outlet installed on the sides of islands or peninsulas, above standard wall height for receptacle outlets, and/or installed on any of the two or more required 20-amp small appliance branch circuits serving a kitchen, pantry, breakfast room, dining room, or similar area, shall be considered as serving the countertop or work surface and will not meet the requirements of this section.

Marcus Coldiron

Marcus Coldiron
Chief Building Official