CCCA
Communications Cable & Connectivity Association
FACTSHEET

The 2026 NEC® is Approved!

What You Need to Know

The National Electrical Code® (NEC®) has received a much-needed update! While you might worry that the changes could impact your job, ICT Integrator work will be safe *and* simplified.

Why the Change?

NEC® Chapter 8, dedicated to communication systems, has maintained an "independent" status since 1937 – more than four decades before the introduction of Ethernet. That made sense when these systems were the domain of traditional telephony and cable utilities and installed differently than electrical distribution circuits. But that's no longer the case.

Communications systems today are commonplace, and any limited-energy Integrator can handle their deployment. The once-clear distinction between different systems has also blurred as modern communications systems now combine signaling and power functions, morphing into systems that closely resemble NEC® Chapter 3 wiring methods. This evolution has led to confusion and inconsistency in code interpretation, leading to the potential for installations that do not meet the Code, causing inspection disputes and obstacles.

What's Changing?

The changes to the 2026 NEC® include:

- Removal of the independent status of Chapter 8
- The new term "limited-energy cables" defined in Article 100 and referenced throughout
- Reorganization and consolidation of several articles in Chapters 7 and 8 to improve flow and reduce redundancy
- Consistent exemptions for limited-energy cables, ensuring Integrators can continue their work without unnecessary restrictions

Limited-Energy Cables

A factory assembly of one or more conductors or optical fibers used for the following circuits and systems:

Class 2 circuits
Class 3 circuits
Class 4 circuits and systems
Optical fiber systems
Communications circuits
Community antenna television circuits (CATV)
Network-powered broadband low-power communications circuits
Premises communications circuits and systems
Power-limited fire alarm (PLFA) circuits

What do NEC® Chapters 7 and 8 Look Like?

Chapters 7 and 8 ensure consistent use of exceptions for limited-energy cables, allowing Integrators to continue the work they've always done. Articles 720, 721, 722, 723, 742, and 750 pertain to all aspects of limited-energy systems, while the remaining will include information for specific systems. Here is the current list of Articles:

General Requirements

- **Article 720: Limited-Energy System Installation**
- **Article 721: Limited-Energy Power Sources**
- **Article 722: Limited-Energy Cable**
- **Article 723: Raceways, Cable Routing Assemblies, and Cable Trays for Limited-Energy Systems**
- **Article 742: Overvoltage Protection of Limited-Energy Systems**
- **Article 750: Limited-Energy System Grounding**

Additional Requirements

- **Article 725: Class 2 and Class 3 Power-Limited Circuits and Equipment**
- **Article 726: Class 4 Fault-Managed Power Circuits and Equipment**
- **Article 760: Fire Alarm Systems**
- **Article 772: Fire-Resistive Cable Systems — Type FR**
- **Article 810: Antenna Systems**
- **Article 820: Community Antenna and Television and Radio Distribution Systems**
- **Article 830: Network-Powered Broadband Low-Power Communications Systems**
- **Article 840: Premises-Powered Broadband Communications Systems**

How Will the Changes Impact the ICT Industry?

If you're worried that the upcoming changes to the 2026 NEC® will negatively impact your job, don't be! These changes are actually designed to streamline ICT system design, installation, and inspection for limited-energy Integrators like you!

It's important to understand that the technical scope of the NEC® is not changing – the proposed changes are strictly structural. Just as they did for Article 770 that covers the installation of optical fiber cables and raceway, NEC® Code-Making Panels are working diligently to include all applicable clauses and exceptions for limited-energy cables. Plus, the NEC® has no bearing on trade jurisdiction and licensing.

The good news is that the revised 2026 NEC® will significantly improve the usability of the Code. The new multi-chapter structure will be easier to follow and apply, helping to eliminate confusion, disputes, and obstacles in the design, installation, and inspection of ICT limited-energy systems.

Questions?

Members of CCCA are part of NFPA Code-Making Panels and can provide the information you need to better understand upcoming changes to the 2026 NEC® and how they'll help streamline your job.

Contact us at www.cccassoc.org