ECHL

THE WIRE

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The Electrical Clearing House of Louisville

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July 2026

Editors' Notes

Beginning with this "Wire" newsletter , we are attempting to send the "Wire" out monthly to keep our members informed of the any new updates from the State capitol. The newsletter will also have some safety tips and updates that may help you on everyday installations.

The "Wire" needs your help. As many of you know, The Metro Louisville Electrical Code Enforcement Department is short of Electrical Inspectors due to retirement and some departures. We have not been able to get any reports for common or specific code violations that the inspectors encounter. It would be of great help if you would let us know what violations you are encountering on your projects. We will not publish who is giving the information , but will only highlight the violation itself and give the code article as reference.

If you want to see other information in the "Wire", please let us know.

September 14, 2026 Code Program

Sign-in 6:30 P.M. - Program at 7:00 P.M.
ELKS LODGE # 8 - 2824 KLONDIKE LN

The code program for September has not been determined at this time. The yearly dues ($60.00) will be due in September. The membership form for renewal is attached to this newsletter and will also be included in the August and September "Wire".

Our General Membership meetings are held at the Elks Lodge located at 2824 Klondike Lane. The meeting starts at 7:00 pm with sign-ins beginning at 6:30 pm.

Stay Alert! Work Smart & Stay Informed!

News from Frankfort

The Department of Housing, Building, and Construction (DHBC) had an Advisory Committee on Tuesday June 30, 2026. The Commissioner, Max Fuller, reported that the 2026 NEC Task Force had recommended adopting the 2026 National Electrical Code with a few sections having delayed enforcement.
As a result of this recommendation, the DBHC has decided to move forward with the adoption process. This process will be in conjunction with the updating of the State Building Code. If there is no opposition, the best-case scenario is the 2026 NEC would go into effect in late 2027. I will talk more about this at our September 14th General Membership meeting.

See you at the September meeting.

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Code Corner

Article 240.21(B)

This article is taking an in-depth look at the National Electrical Code (NEC) requirements involving the main infrastructure of an electrical system: branch circuits and feeders.
The simple approach is where the overcurrent protective device (OCPD) is at the point where the conductor receives its supply, but we looked at feeder taps where there is a combination approach of using the upstream and downstream devices to provide the necessary protection.
Now we will look at the specifics of the feeder tap rules to get a better understanding of how the combination approach still protects the conductors.

Feeder tap rules

The feeder tap rules are broken up into five conditions with different rules:

- Tap conductors not more than 10 feet long
- Tap conductors not more than 25 feet long
- Tap conductors supplying a transformer where the combined total length of the primary and secondary conductor is not more than 25 feet
- Tap conductors more than 25 feet long in high-bay manufacturing buildings
- Tap conductors outside of buildings or structures with no length limitations

The most-used tap conductor rules are the first two conditions in the above list. It is important to note that these conditions apply to the total length of conductor, not just physical distance. This means that if the tap conductors leave the tap box and enter the panelboard but use 5–6 feet to wrap around and terminate in the main circuit breaker, the length of the conductor in the tap box and panelboard count toward the total length calculation. The 10-foot and 25-foot restrictions are from lug to lug measured along the length of the conductor.
If the tap conductors remain short enough to qualify for the 10-foot tap rule, the requirements are the least restrictive. First, the ampacity of the tap conductors must be not less than the combined loads supplied . This is how we determined the feeder size, so this should not be an issue. But the ampacity must also not be less than the rating of equipment containing OCPDs or the rating of the OCPD in which the tap conductors terminate. For our example, this won't be a problem, as they are landing in a 225A OCPD. However, the way the 10-foot rule is written, 10-foot tap conductors can land in a "main lug only" panelboard, and the tap conductors need to have an ampacity that exceeds the rating of the MLO panel. This accounts for what the panelboard can supply versus what we calculated.

Next, 10-foot tap conductors must not extend past the equipment they are supplying. Therefore, we cannot run tap conductors to an MLO panelboard with lugs on the other side of the bus and extend the tap into another panelboard side-by-side with this one. If that is required due to needing extra space for circuit breakers, then we must land in a main circuit breaker to provide overcurrent protection of the conductors that extend to the second panelboard. Also, it is important that tap conductors are protected from physical damage from the tap enclosure all the way to the equipment they supply.

Finally, for the combination of the upstream and downstream OCPDs to effectively protect the tap conductors, there are limits to sizing the upstream device. For installations where the tap conductors leave the enclosure where the tap is made, the ampacity of 10-foot tap conductors must not be less than one-tenth of the upstream OCPD rating. In our example, this means if we're using a feeder OCPD upstream of 800A, any tap that qualifies under the 10-foot rule must have an ampacity of at least 80A.

Now, let's examine the rules that apply to tap conductors limited to 25 feet in length. Here the NEC makes things a little less complicated. First, it eliminates the option for the tap conductors to feed an MLO panelboard or other equipment containing OCPDs, and it requires the tap conductors to terminate in a single circuit breaker or set of fuses that will limit the load current to the ampacity of the tap conductors or less.

Continued on Page 3

ECHL
THE WIRE

July 2026

P.O. Box 2085
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Code Corner

Article 240.21(B)

(Continued from Page 2)

So, if we can't limit our tap conductors to less than 10 feet, we will need to terminate in an OCPD that will provide the overload protection the tap conductors need.
There is also some consideration to the ratio of the upstream OCPD to the ampacity of the tap conductors. The limited length of the 10-foot tap conductors minimizes the risk of a short-circuit or ground-fault in the tap conductors, but the longer length of the 25-foot tap conductors means there is more of a chance. Therefore, the ratio of tap conductor ampacity to upstream OCPD rating is more restrictive at one-third instead of one-tenth of the rating. This means the smallest tap conductor that uses the 25-foot rule must at least have an ampacity of 266.67A.

This puts us in a little bit of a bind here, since the 250-kcmil conductors only have an ampacity of 255A in the 75℃ column and even less when factoring in conditions of use. This means we will need to look at possible ways to limit the number of current-carrying conductors in the same raceway and reassess the ambient temperature where these conductors will be installed. At a minimum, we will need to increase the size of tap conductors to 300 kcmil. So, keeping the tap conductors to the shortest length possible is a good idea.

Other conditions
Let's look at the other conditions for tap conductors that are less common in practice, but in certain instances are helpful to electrical system designers. Take, for instance, the high-bay manufacturing tap rule. For installations with high ceilings and open spaces typically found in manufacturing facilities, it would be very difficult to limit the length of a tap conductor to less than 25 feet if the ceiling is 35 feet high. But there are significant restrictions to be able to use this rule, such as conditions of maintenance and supervision ensuring only qualified people will service the system.For installations with high ceilings and open spaces typically found in manufacturing facilities, it would be very difficult to limit the length of a tap conductor to less than 25 feet if the ceiling is 35 feet high. But there are significant restrictions to be able to use this rule, such as conditions of maintenance and supervision ensuring only qualified people will service the system.
They also give restrictions on horizontal and total length. Remember, this is about high-bay installations here and not just an open permission slip to run tap conductors all over the facility. Therefore, the tap conductors are only permitted to run a maximum of 25 feet horizontally before dropping down to the equipment supplied but, at no time are the tap conductors permitted to be longer than 100 feet total, and the tap must be made no less than 30 feet from the floor.

Another less common use of this rule is for tap conductors outside of a building. Here there is no restriction on length, but the conductors must be protected from physical damage and land in a disconnect either before they enter the building or immediately after they enter, or as the NEC states, nearest the point of entrance. This unlimited length is permitted because the tap conductors are not installed in a building that could be damaged by overloaded or damaged conductors. If conductors are overheating and installed underground, it might cause an unplanned outage, but remember the purpose of the NEC is to protect people and property. This doesn't necessarily mean the installation will be efficient or ideal. It means the installation will be safe.
Remember, stay safe and remember to always test before you touch!

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The Most Common Electrical Code Violations — & How to Prevent Them

These violations are costing you time and money.

4. No AFCI Protection in Required Areas
Code Reference: NEC 210.12
Violation: Branch circuits in bedrooms, living rooms, or dens missing arc fault protection.
Why it matters: AFCIs prevent electrical fires caused by arcing conductors.
How to prevent it:

- Use AFCI breakers or combination AFCI/GFCI receptacles.
- Understand that most new dwelling circuits require AFCI protection—even lighting circuits.

5. Box Fill Violations
Code Reference: NEC 314.16
Violation: Too many wires stuffed into an outlet, switch, or junction box.
Why it matters: Overfilled boxes generate heat and make connections unreliable.
How to prevent it:

- Count conductors, devices, and grounds using NEC volume allowances.
- Use larger boxes or extension rings when needed.

6. Improper Conductor Termination
Code Reference: NEC 110.14(A)
Violation: Wires not secured properly, wrong wire type for terminal, or over-stripping insulation.
Why it matters: Loose or incorrect terminations cause arcing and overheating.
How to prevent it:

- Match wire type (copper vs. aluminum) and size to terminal ratings.
- Use torque screwdrivers where required.
- Avoid damaging wire strands or insulation during prep.

You lose money when you are turned down on a project. It also costs you time, when you have to return to the job site to make the necessary changes to correct the violation, and that too, costs you money.

LG&E NEWS

Extra Cash In Your Pocket:

Did you know you could earn cash incentives for saving energy during times of high energy demand? Residential and small business customers can enroll in the Peak Time Rebates incentive for an annual cash reward and can opt into actions when an event occurs.

- On event days, you get to choose what to do (or not do) to reduce your usage. Actions could include turning off lights, adjusting your thermostat or minimizing appliance use.
- Before an event, the program will typically provide a day-ahead notification to you via your preferred communication channel (text, phone and/or email). Additionally, a reminder message will be sent on the day of the event.
- During an event, if you prefer not to participate, you can choose to just go about your day. By doing so, it is likely you would not earn an incentive for that event. Visit lge-ku.com/peak-time-rebates to find out if you are eligible, to sign up and to learn more about the program.

SAFETY FIRST: FLAMMABLE LIQUID STORAGE

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Summer often involves projects using gasoline, paint thinners or solvents. Keep your home safe by following these storage rules:

- Keep It Out: Store all flammable liquids in a well-ventilated area outside the home, such as a detached garage or shed.
- Avoid Ignition: Never store these liquids near appliances with pilot lights, such as your furnace or water heater.
- Use Approved Containers: Only store liquids in containers designed and labeled for that specific material.

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Properly Applying Article 130 NFPA 70E—Part 2

(Continued from April 2026 "Wire")

It's about more than just risk assessments

In general, an energized electrical work permits "EEWP" (130.2) is required when an employee will cross the restricted approach boundary or will interact with the equipment when conductors or circuit parts are not exposed but an increased likelihood of injury from an exposure to an arc flash hazard exists. Where required, an EEWP, job planning and job briefing must be performed, implemented and documented. See the exemptions to an EEWP in 130.2(C).

Section 130.7 provides requirements for personal and other protective equipment. Employees must use and be given protective equipment made for each part of the body that has to be protected. It must be protected from damage, visually inspected before each use and cared for properly to maintain a safe, clean and reliable condition in accordance with the manufacturers' instructions.

General PPE requirements mandate all parts of the body are protected. Rubber insulating gloves must meet the maximum use voltage requirements of Table 130.7(C) (7)(a) and all rubber insulating equipment, including, but not limited to, gloves, sleeves and blankets, must be tested at intervals not exceeding those in Table 130.7(C)(7)(b). Requirements for other protective equipment [130.7(D)] such as insulated tools and equipment, barriers to prevent inadvertent contact, ladders, nonconductive fish tapes for pulling wire and more must be employed for all work involving electrical hazards.

It is important to apply all applicable precautions for personnel activity in Section 130.8. This includes, but is not limited to, requirements to ensure employees stay alert and eliminate blind reaching, the need for additional lighting, how conductive objects are handled, confined spaces, hinged doors/panels, housekeeping, clear spaces, flammable material, anticipating failure, opening/closing of circuits routinely or after device operation, safety interlocks, alerting techniques, barricades and look-alike equipment.

Sections 130.9 and 130.10 contain requirements for working within the limited approach boundary of overhead lines and underground electrical lines and equipment, and 130.11 addresses cutting or drilling into equipment floors and walls.

Section 130.12 addresses cutting, removing or rerouting electrical conductors and circuit parts where the conductor terminations or circuit parts are not within sight from the point of work. This requirement mandates additional steps to verify the absence of voltage or to identify the conductors or circuit parts being worked on before cutting, removing or rerouting. Examples of these additional steps can be found in the associated informational note.

The requirements in Article 130 must be applied for all work involving electrical hazards. While performing shock and arc flash risk assessments are critically important, implementing comprehensive electrical safe work practices requires much more.

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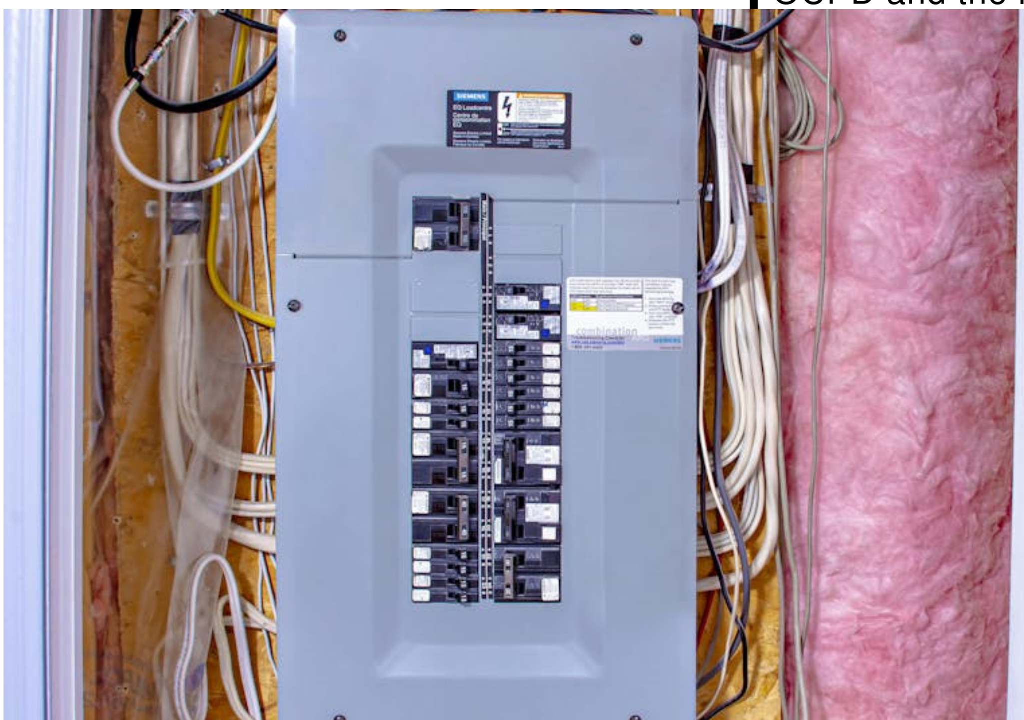
Is Your Branch Circuit to Blame?

From no power to intermittent faults and hidden power quality culprits, learn how to quickly identify and fix the three most common causes of branch-circuit failures.



Branch circuits are undoubtedly the most commonly installed circuits in both residential and non-residential applications. And, since they supply the equipment that utilizes the electricity, they are often in the limelight when it comes to trouble calls. Rarely is it a problem with the branch-circuit wiring itself. The cause is usually found at the end of the branch circuit — the load. In some cases, it could be other branch circuits causing misoperation of one circuit. This article first examines the National Electrical Code (NEC) definition of the branch circuit. Then, three of the most common trouble calls associated with branch circuits are explored. Finally, maintenance requirements are discussed.

The branch circuit

A branch circuit is defined in the NEC as the conductors that run from the final overcurrent protective device in a circuit to the outlet (**Fig. 1**). Note that this does not include the overcurrent protective device (OCPD) — typically the fuse or circuit breaker supplying the branch circuit — nor does it include the outlet device itself. The branch circuit is the conductors only. However, for troubleshooting and maintenance, it is practical to discuss the OCPD and the load supplied.

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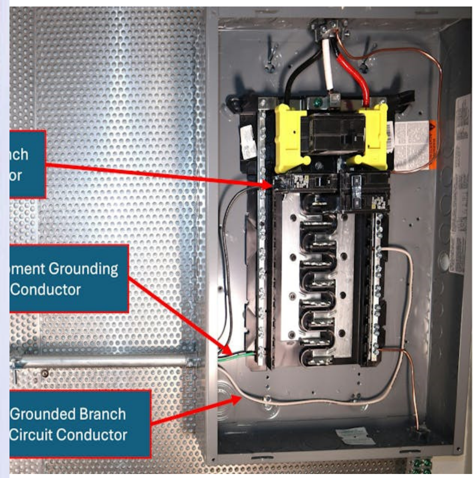
e OCPD and the load sup-



luctors from the terminal of the overcurrent protective device for the circuit to the outlet device are the branch circuit. On this training mockup, the circuit conductors are easy to identify. In panelboards with several branch circuits, take care to properly identify the conductors of the faulty branch circuit.

Following are three of the most common problems with branch circuits and tips on how to solve them.

1. No power

This first one seems simple. No power — turn the breaker back on! But consider that the purpose of the OCPD is to prevent a fire. So, resetting and turning a breaker back on — or replacing fuses on a fault with excessive current flow — does not make sense.

Continued on Page 6

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In fact, both OSHA Part 1910 Subpart S and the NFPA 70E, Standard for Electrical Safety in the Workplace, prohibit closing a circuit breaker or replacing circuit fuses until it is known that the circuit can be safely reenergized.

Therefore, finding the cause of the overcurrent device operation is the first step in solving the problem. A walk-through of the circuit may reveal the obvious. The smell of burnt insulation or discoloration on enclosures is definitely a suspect item (**Photo 1**).

Photo 1. A walkdown of the branch circuit can often identify obvious problems, such as these overheated conductors. Once the fault is isolated, the branch-circuit conductors should be tested for shorts and ground faults to ensure the branch-circuit wiring was not damaged.

Checking for trips on ground-fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs) and arc-fault circuit interrupters (AFCIs) may help to pinpoint issues. For GFCI trips, look for faulted equipment or the presence of water or moisture around equipment. Tripping of AFCIs may indicate a problem with the branch-circuit conductors themselves. The breakdown of older insulation or the nail driven through the wall that nicks a wire may be the cause. Unfortunately, the AFCI trips may not be the easiest to find or repair. Depending on building age, arc-fault and ground-fault devices may not be installed per the current Code requirements (see Sidebar on page 30, "Keeping Branch Circuits NEC Compliant"). Expanded requirements for GFCIs did not appear in the Code until the 1970s. AFCI requirements first appeared in 1999, and the number of circuits requiring such protection has increased over the Code cycles.

If a visual inspection does not reveal the obvious, meter testing is necessary to determine the cause of the trip. You must understand the circuit to troubleshoot effectively. Know your test equipment and its limitations. Short circuits are characterized by instantaneous OCPD operation caused by very low resistance between conductors. Yet, motor windings will typically measure a very low-resistance value as they are just coils of wire. Low readings with a digital multimeter (DMM) may not always be an indication of a short circuit — a more accurate low-resistance ohmmeter may be needed. With no loads attached to the branch circuit, you should read infinite resistance between the ungrounded conductor(s) and the neutral or the equipment-grounding conductor (EGC). Also, make sure you are not checking for shorts and ground faults through parallel circuits.

Following a logical and sequential set of steps is the best method for any type of troubleshooting. The most likely cause of OCPD operation is a short circuit, ground fault, or overload. Rarely is it a faulty circuit breaker. A short circuit or ground-fault condition can be expected to trip a breaker instantaneously, while an overload may take from seconds to minutes to cause OCPD operation.

If an overload is suspected, use a clamp-on ammeter to measure current flow on branch-circuit conductors while following all safety precautions for testing and measuring energized circuits. Record the amount of current that flows in the circuit. If possible, use test equipment that will record the data, since overloads may take some time to occur. Compare readings to nameplate data and manufacturer's instructions.

Continued on page 7

ECHL THE WIRE

July 2026

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Isolating short circuits and ground faults may require additional test equipment beyond the DMM. A panelboard may require being put into an electrically safe work condition. It is generally best to begin at the source of the branch circuit — the load side of the OCPD. Test for ground faults using a megohmmeter. Disconnect any electronics that could be damaged by the higher voltage output of the megohmmeter. Test each ungrounded conductor from phase to ground. If any reading is less than 1 megohm, disconnect the load, and test the branch circuit and the load individually to isolate the ground fault (**Fig. 2**).

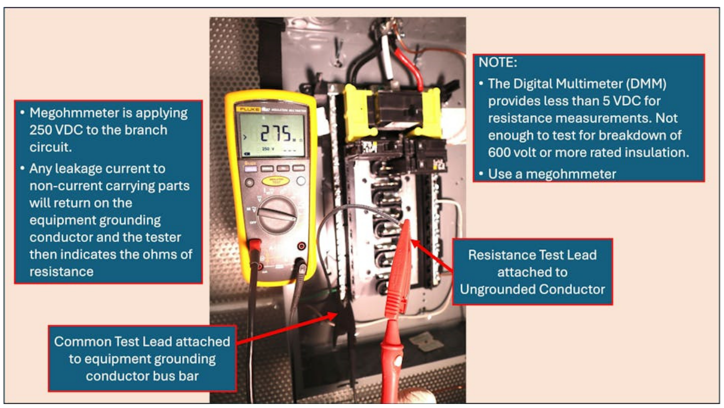

Fig. 2. A ground fault is when current flows into the normally non-current components of the system. The equipment-grounding conductor returns the ground fault current to the panelboard to allow the circuit breaker to trip and clear the fault. Use a megohmmeter to test for ground faults.

2. Intermittent troubles

Typical trouble calls: “Every once in a while, the breaker trips, and we don’t know why.” Or “Sometimes, the equipment works, and sometimes it doesn’t.” If overload conditions have been eliminated, next suspect something that can cause intermittent problems — loose terminal connections.

Faulty terminal connections can be loose, causing voltage issues. They may eventually overheat, resulting in catastrophic failure. Make sure all terminations are tightened to their specified torque values.

Improperly tightened terminals continue to be an issue with all electrical installations. It is tempting to just “tighten up all those terminal screws.” But, if not done properly, more issues may be created. Loose terminal connections increase resistance and can cause erratic equipment operation. Applying too much torque can strip threads, distort terminals, damage the conductor, and increase resistance. Small increases in resistance values make for proportionately much larger increases in heat.

NEC Sec. 110.14(D) [Terminal Connection Torque] states, “Tightening torque values for terminal connections shall be as indicated on equipment or in installation instructions provided by the manufacturer. An approved means shall be used to achieve the indicated torque value.” Comply with the Code, follow manufacturers’ instructions, and use an approved method to verify termination torque and prevent branch-circuit overheating.
See **Photo 2** for one common method to verify proper torque on branch-circuit OCPDs and outlet devices — the torque screwdriver
.

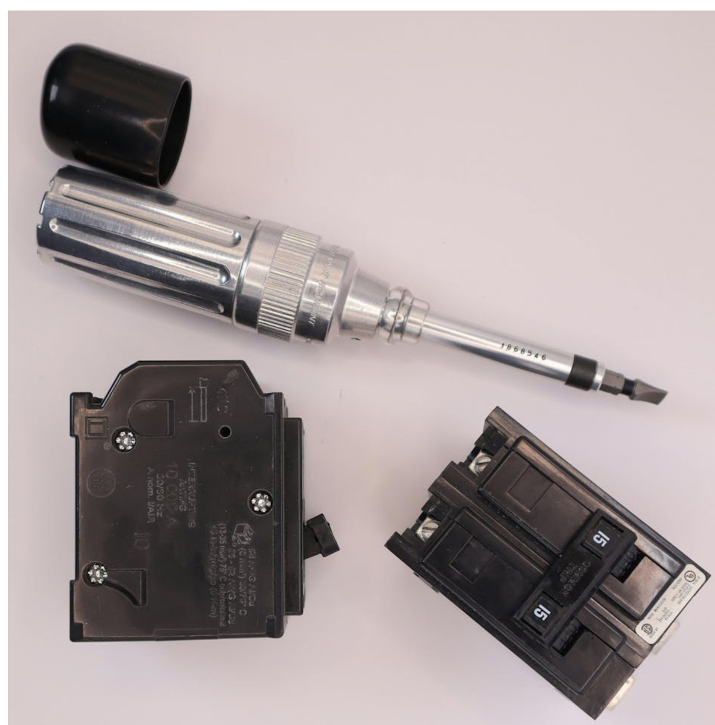

Photo 2.

Continued on page 8

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THE WIRE

July 2026

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Sec. 110.14 provides torque requirements for terminal connections. One method is the use of the torque screwdriver. The torque requirements are provided on the molded-case breaker. The screwdriver is adjusted by first removing the cap from the end of the tool.

3. The not-so-obvious power quality problems

If overheating and OCPD operation continue to exist, consider power quality problems. Power quality issues can be easily overlooked. Many contractors and facility maintenance staff do not have power quality analyzers to troubleshoot these problems. Personnel may not be adequately trained to measure and analyze such branch-circuit problems. Power quality problems on branch circuits include nonlinear loads that operate either on the branch circuit or elsewhere in the distribution system. Nonlinear loads are loads that rectify AC incoming power to provide DC to the circuit. Examples are computers, printers, variable-speed drives, UPS systems, and LED lighting. These loads produce harmonic currents that cause overheating in branch circuits and distort the 60-hertz sine wave, causing equipment to not operate properly. Voltage sags and swells in the distribution system may cause misoperation of loads on the branch circuit.

Power quality analysis may well isolate the problems of tripping circuit breakers when no other apparent cause can be found (**Fig. 3**). Additionally, monitoring and analyzing power quality in commercial and industrial branch circuits uncovers those sometimes unexplainable problems: Why does the breaker only trip around 2 a.m. on certain nights? What causes the VFD to trip on overvoltage when the circuit voltage is well within specifications? Consider power quality!

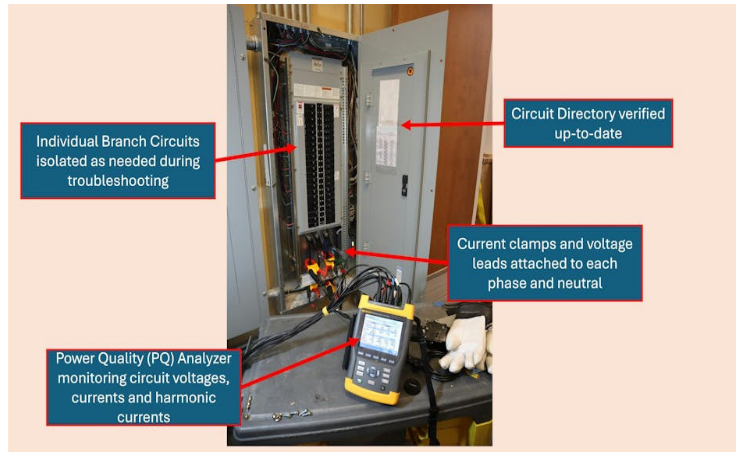

Fig. 3. Power quality issues can cause overheating, circuit breaker trips, electronic equipment malfunctions, and other issues. The PQ analyzer monitors the characteristics of the voltage and current in the circuit. Once problems are identified, different correction methods must be employed, depending upon the PQ issue, which could include excessive harmonic currents, sags and swells, unbalance, and poor power factor.

Maintenance requirements

The NFPA 70B, *Standard for Electrical Equipment Maintenance*, does not address branch circuits specifically. However, it does provide maintenance and testing requirements for what is at either end of the branch circuit — the overcurrent protective devices, outlet devices, and various loads. By maintaining the equipment and devices protecting the branch and the devices and loads supplied, the integrity of the branch circuit is maintained. Given time, all electrical equipment degrades and will fail. Heating and cooling from current flow causes expansion and contraction of components within devices and equipment. Terminals will loosen. To maintain branch-circuit components, first determine which branch circuits are to receive regular maintenance and what testing is to be performed. NFPA 70B provides the requirements to select circuits and determine their

Continued on Page 9

their required maintenance frequency. It then lists the required maintenance items and tests to be performed. Use this standard to include branch circuits in a maintenance program.

Summary

A branch circuit that fails to operate properly is sure to result in trouble calls. Many problems can be isolated to one of three common causes: short circuits, ground faults, or overloads. Understanding their symptoms — and how to troubleshoot and isolate them — is the job of the electrical professional. Complying with Code requirements and combining effective troubleshooting with good maintenance practices results in less downtime and a safer installation.

Keeping Branch Circuits NEC Compliant

While requirements for branch circuits are found throughout the National Electrical Code (NEC), below are some of the code sections to help ensure compliance:

110.7: Use the proper test equipment once branch circuits are installed or repaired to verify they are free from short circuits and ground faults.

110.8: Watch for DIYer's who may have become creative! Make sure only NEC wiring methods are used for branch circuit installation or modifications.

110.12: Be the professional! Make sure all work is completed in a "professional and skillful manner." Close unused opening as specified in the NEC. Refer to the NECA 1-2015, Standard for Good Workmanship in Electrical Construction and other standards as needed.

110.14: Follow all requirements for terminals, splices, temperature limitations or terminals, and terminal connection torque.

110.17: Ensure only qualified persons, see NEC Article 100 definition), service and maintain branch circuits and all electrical systems and equipment. Follow any manufacturers' instructions and use identified replacement parts.

110.22: Make sure all branch-circuit disconnecting means are properly identified per the NEC.

210.5: When replacing conductors or modifying a branch circuit ensure all conductors are properly identified.

210.8: There are 6 subsections to 210.8 covering several different applications of GFCI's. Verify GFCI protection is provided in all required locations

210.12: Verify AFCI protection in all required locations and by the proper methods specified in this section.

408.4(A): Provide a legible and permanent description of every circuit. For panelboards, this is the circuit directory located in, on, or adjacent to the panelboard. For switches and larger circuit breakers, the description must be at each switch or breaker.

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Wrong Wiring Method for Outdoors

Type NM cables cannot be installed outdoors. Section 334.12(B)(4) clearly states that Type NM cable is not permitted to be installed in damp or wet locations. This is certainly a wet location. There is also a gray UF cable installed behind the yellow NM cable. UF cable is permitted in this outdoor wet location; however, some protection from physical damage should have been provided, since this cable could be stepped on, kicked, bumped, or otherwise damaged. Jamming two cables into a connector designed for only one cable is a violation of Sec. 110.3(B). I'm not sure if those blue insulated NM cable staples are suitable for installation in direct sunlight or this outdoor wet location. Lastly, the buried PVC junction box is probably fine for installation in wet locations, but I am not sure if it is identified or listed for being directly buried in the ground.

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Application for Membership

I hereby make an application for membership into the Electrical Clearing House of Louisvil Date: ____________

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Home Address City State Zip Code

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Contact Phone # Email Address

Organization: IEC ☐ ABC ☐ IBEW ☐ NECA ☐ N/A ☐ Other: ____________

Member Type:

Contractor ☐ Supplier ☐ Inspector ☐ Fire Prevention ☐

Electrician ☐ Utility ☐ Maintenance ☐ Other ☐

Please check all that apply.

License Number: EE: ____________ ME ____________ CE ____________

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Place of Employment

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Employer Address City State Zip Code

______________ ______________________________
Employer Phone Employer Email Address

I agree to abide by the Constitution, By-Laws and Rules of the Clearing House

____
Signature

Annual Membership Dues are $60.00

Payable with application and renewed every September

Make checks payable to:

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