



**COUNTY OF MENDOCINO**  
**DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND BUILDING SERVICES**

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## **Building Policy 02. Utilities & Service Connections**

### **Previous Policies**

This consolidated policy replaces and supersedes the following prior bulletins and policies:

- Building Bulletin 04: Gas and Electric Utilities Release Prior to Building Final, April 15, 1992
- Building Policy 17: Allowable Number of Electrical Meter Services (One Parcel), October 13, 2009
- Building Policy 28: Temporary Power, October 14, 2009
- Building Policy 34: Electric Meter (Utility Owned), November 17, 2017

### **Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to provide comprehensive and consistent direction regarding:

- The number and type of electrical meter services permitted on a parcel;
- Requirements and limitations associated with temporary power;
- Conditions allowing gas and electric utility release prior to building final;
- Standards and procedures for the issuance or replacement of electric (utility-owned) meter service panels.

These requirements ensure public safety through proper inspection, sequencing of utility connections, and structural completion.

### **Definitions**

For the purposes of this policy:

- **Agricultural Meters:** Electrical meters serving agricultural activities on agriculturally zoned lands.
- **Commercial / Industrial Meters:** Electrical meters serving an approved commercial or industrial tenant space or use.
- **Metered Service / Electrical Meter Service Panel:** A utility-owned device used to measure electrical consumption and provide service to a structure or approved use.
- **Residential Meters:** Electrical meters serving permitted residential structures of associated water systems (e.g., well pumps).
- **Temporary Power:** A limited-duration electrical service authorized during the course of permitted construction.
- **Utility Release:** Authorization for PG&E or another utility provider to energize gas or electric service prior to final inspection.

### **Objectives**

This policy aims to:

1. Establish the allowable number and type of meters permitted per parcel and use type.
2. Clarify when temporary power may be authorized and under what limitations.
3. Define eligibility and conditions for early gas/electric utility release.

4. Provide clear criteria for when electric meter service panel permits may be issued over the counter versus requiring plan review.
5. Ensure proper inspection, safety verification, and compliance with building, zoning, fire, and environmental health requirements.

### Authority

The authority for this procedure is contained in the Mendocino County Code and the California Building Standards Code, including but not limited to:

- Mendocino County Code (MCC) Chapter 18.04.025
- California Building Code (CBC), Sections 104 & 112
- California Electrical Code (CEC) Section 110.2 & 230.79

### Policy

#### **1. Electrical Meter Services – Permanent and Temporary**

Mendocino County Planning & Building Services regulates the installation, allowance, and issuance of both permanent electrical meter services and temporary power permits. The following provisions establish the allowable number and type of meters per parcel.

##### 1.1 Residential Metered Services

1. One residential metered service for the main residence.
2. One metered service for a remote well pump supplying water to the main residence.
3. One residential metered service for a second residence on the same parcel, provided it has a different address.
4. One metered service for a remote well pump supplying water to the second residence.

##### 1.2 Agricultural Metered Services

1. One metered service may be installed for each agricultural pump on land zoned agricultural, rangeland, forestland, or timber production, supplying agricultural or approved resource land use as approved by the Building Official.

##### 1.3 Commercial / Industrial Metered Services

1. One metered service for each approved commercial or industrial tenant space on property zoned commercial or industrial.
2. One metered service for each approved commercial or industrial tenant space requiring a different electrical phase (e.g., three-phase vs. single-phase).
3. One commercial metered service may be installed on a residential parcel for an accessory structure when:
  - Approved by the Building Official,
  - The business has a valid business license,
  - The use qualifies as a home occupation or cottage industry under County zoning regulations, and
  - The structure has been approved for that occupancy under applicable building codes.

##### 1.4 Distinction Between Permanent and Temporary Services

- **Permanent meters** are tied to lawful, approved uses and are subject to zoning, building, and land-use regulations.
- **Temporary power** is strictly for construction purposes and does not constitute approval of a permanent service.

- The issuance of temporary power does not guarantee future approval for a permanent meter of the same type or location.

#### 1.5 Requirement for Temporary Power Agreement

A temporary Power Agreement must be completed, signed, and approved prior to the issuance of any temporary power permit. The agreement must acknowledge:

- Temporary power approval is limited.
- All work under the associated building permit must be completed and pass final inspection.
- Misuse of temporary power or violations of Mendocino County Codes may result in power disconnection at the discretion of the Building Official.

### **2. Utility-Owned Electric Meter Panels (Service Panels)**

This section clarifies when a permit for an electrical panel (commonly referred to as a meter) may be issued “over the counter” (without plan review).

#### 2.1 General Requirements

1. A single-family residence must have a minimum service rating of 100 amps, 3-wire (CEC 230.79(c)).
2. An “over-the-counter” permit may be issued only when replacing an existing meter service panel on a legal, permitted structure and when the replacement is of the same amperage.

#### 2.2 When Plan Review is Required

A permit for a new residential or commercial electrical meter service panel cannot be issued until the building structure’s plan-check review process is complete. The meter will then be included with the issued building permit.

#### 2.3 Large Service (Over 200 Amps)

Any new electrical meter service panel rated over 200 amps requires:

- Load calculations, and
- Line drawings prepared by an electrical engineer or a CA-licensed electrical contractor.

#### 2.4 Non-Allowable Considerations

Amperage for an electrical meter-main service panel must be justified based on existing electrical loads only; future, proposed, or projected loads will not be considered.

#### 2.5 Other Meter Installations

Any new or modified electrical meter installation outside the specific provisions above must be reviewed and approved by a Building Inspector.

#### 2.6 Restrictions Related to Temporary Housing (from Fire Disaster Recovery)

Meter permits may be issued; however, no inspection or PG&E approved-sticker-release will occur until an Administrative Permit has been issued for a Temporary Trailer Coach associated with fire recovery.

### **3. Release of Gas and Electric Utilities Prior to Final Inspection**

Building contractors requesting release of both gas and electric utilities prior to building final, specifically for the purpose of drying plaster or facilitating interior painting, may receive approval for a period not to exceed 90 days, subject to review by the Building Official and the following conditions:

### 3.1 Residential Structures

1. Must have an approved building permit for the utility or structure being constructed.
2. Must have a passing inspection for the meter panel in which the power will be released to.
3. All gas piping must be installed and pass the required pressure test.
4. An additional gas test may be required by the inspector if:
  - Six (6) months have elapsed since meter release, or
  - Sufficient cause exists.

### 3.2 Nonresidential Structures

The structure must be substantially complete, and all zoning, Environmental Health Department, Fire Department, and life-safety requirements must be satisfied prior to gas meter release as the second utility.

### 3.3 Revocation of Early Utility Release

Early utility release will be revoked if any builder or owner allows:

- Occupancy of a residential structure prior to final inspection approval, or
- Occupancy of a commercial structure prior to issuance of a Certificate of Occupancy.

*This policy is effective as of the date of the signatures below.*

Policy Approved:   
Richard Anglely, Chief Building Official

Date: 03-08-2026

Policy Approved:   
Julia Krog, Director

Date: 03-10-2026