



AUSTIN FIRE DEPARTMENT

4201 ED BLUESTEIN RD. AUSTIN, TX 78721 P: 512.974.0130 F: 512.974.0141

Question/Comment

I'm not sure if this is the correct Venue (It concern's electrical safety, as it relates to fire hazards). I've heard of and seen fires that occurred to to unsheathed (standard home / residential wiring which is called "Romex" albeit, plastic sheathed individual conductors, 3 for hot neut & ground and five wire (two split phase 240vac lines, neut & hot for 120vac and grd.), these cables though water proof and usually rated at a max of 600vac as per ul / nec requirements, nonetheless when sheared by a nail, a sharp bend or some other type of damaging event can cause not only an electrical shock (like if they come in contact with sheet metal or some other ungrounded conductor), but can also start house fires, indeed I had a firman from Austin tell me this. These problems and dangers could be mostly eliminated if electricians were required to use as a minimum, "bx cable" the metal clad electrical conductors which also come in the same number and guage size as romex but the metal spiral preents, say, for example, someone drilling into a wall from causing a short or even worse, an over current condition that could cause a melted insulator on a wire to start a fire (for example an electrical device that had shorted windings without overload protection that overload's a circuit causing not a short but worse, an over heated wire that then can cause combustible ignition).

Obviously, standard commercial / industrial metal conduit is the best choice but this is VERY expensive, this IS required in structures over two stories, I believe it should be required in ALL wooden structures (maybe an exception can be made for houses using the sheet metal 2 x 4'es designed specifically for drywall and also concrete and other non flammable building materials). The bottom line : Metal sheathing on household electrical conductors prevents shocks since the offending conductor, should it lose it's insulation,

Response

This falls within the scope of the National Electric Code (NEC) and International Residential Code (IRC). This comment has been sent to those groups for consideration.

Question/Comment

It makes absolutely zero sense why I should have to trash a \$1000 "grill" that's no more than a hunk of metal because I have no propane in storage in my apartment garage. It is no more combustible than a frying pan. The issue is clearly the combustible components which is not the actual grill itself so let's make this applicable to the actual problem materials not just a blanket 'let's get rid of everything' rule.

Response

While the Austin Fire Department is sympathetic to the inconveniences caused by the local amendment, it has been adopted in response to fire incident data, which have revealed an alarming number of fires at apartment communities in Austin. In fact, some of the deadliest and most destructive fires in Austin's history have occurred at apartment communities.