



Canadian Standards Association
Mississauga, Ontario
To the Part I Committee

Subject No. 3243

Chair: R Leduc

Date: March 31, 2005

Title: Separate Circuits for Bathroom Receptacles, Rule 26-722(h)

Submitted by: Bill McMullan of Manitoba Hydro on March 16, 2005.

Proposal: Request for new Rule 26-722 (h) to read as follows:

(h) Receptacles as required by Rule 26-710 (f) installed in each bathroom or washrooms shall be supplied by a branch circuit that does not supply any other outlets.

Reasons for Request: Today more high wattage appliances like hairdryers, curling irons etc. are being used in bathrooms and in more than one bathroom at the same time . we have had complains from new home owners and some contractors and would like this in the code for this code cycle

This is in the NEC section 210-11 (c) (3) since 1999.

Chair's Comments:

I realize that Section 26 is full of design criteria, but I must point out that the Object of the Code in Section 0 clearly states that:

This Code is not intended as a design specification nor an instruction manual for untrained persons.

Subcommittee Deliberations (1st Round)

Based on an early assessment of the comments, the Chair declares that the SC will not reach consensus on the proposal in the current form. The comments so far range as follows:

1. Is there a real safety issue here? A simple reference to the current NEC discussions on the topic is not adequate substantiation.
2. Perhaps we need to make it a little less restrictive by allowing the bathroom lighting and fan to be on the circuit
3. The GFCI should be on a separate circuit with no other outlets on the circuit including the bathroom lights and fan.

The Chair would also like to point out that there it is in a common practice in some jurisdictions to allow the hydromassage bathtub to be fed from the bathroom GFCI. Since the GFCI receptacle is unlikely to be used when there's someone in the tub, this hasn't presented a problem.

Chair's Comments (for a 2nd Round)

Since the comments thus far indicate some diametrically opposed views (from wanting the bathroom lights and fan to be allowed on the circuit to not allowing this) and there appears to be exceptions where proper design would permit other devices to be on the bathroom GFCI circuit (hydromassage tubs), the chair would suggest that this subject needs much more thought and substantiation. The Chair also believes that Part I should probably take a serious look at the statement on the Object of the Code around the statement "This Code is not intended as a design specification" and an evaluation needs to be done as to what extent the CE Code should go into performance and design issues.

The submitter has offered to amend the proposal to include the bathroom lights and fan but this will not address the concern from one member wanting a dedicated circuit for the receptacle with nothing else on.

There is also the concern with increased cost of installation that needs to be considered.

The Chair proposes that the Subject be rejected and closed. The submitter should find more substantiation for the safety (not performance) issues around this issue before resubmitting the subject.

The Chair also proposes that the SC send a letter to the Executive Committee to develop a strategy for reviewing the "design" statement in the object of the Code.

Subcommittee Deliberations (2nd Round)

8 members responded, 50% agreeing to close the subject and 50% wishing to keep the proposal open.

Of those disagreeing to close the subject, there seemed to be emerging polarized views which complicated the matter further. Some felt that a separate circuit for the bathroom receptacle was too restrictive and that we should allow other outlets such as the bathroom lighting and fan; other felt that the bathroom receptacle needs to be on a separate circuit. They all agreed that a rule was needed and that the work to get it right should continue.

Chair's Comments (for a 3rd Round)

Seeing no consensus the Chair went back to the submitter to see if we could come up with a better proposal to meet some of the concerns of the members. To expedite matters, the Chair did a quick email survey with the submitter's revised proposal as follows:

From: Rene Leduc
Sent: Monday, March 28, 2005 12:14 PM
Subject: Subject 3243 - Bathroom receptacle separate ckt
Dear Section 26 members,

This subject is creating some very polarized views. In the first round, there was about 50% for and 50% against the proposal. Some didn't think it was a safety issue, others felt we should allow other outlets (lighting and fan).

Because of the varied views, the Chair proposed closing the Subject in the 2nd round. Again this raised a varied response. Some didn't think it to be a safety issue but rather a performance one. Some still want the receptacle on a separate circuit and others still want it to include other outlets.

The Chair would like to point out that there may be a variety of ways that this issue could be resolved by proper design... the separate ckt is only one of a number of ways. For example, having the receptacle on a 20A ckt (t-slot receptacles) would likely also address the problem. Should the SC be prescribing design?... Is our way overkill?... Can we allow alternatives?... Should we be getting into design on this particular issue?

In any case, the Chair has consulted with the submitter and he has agreed to an amended proposal as follows:

(h) Receptacles as required by Rule 26-710 (f) shall be supplied by a dedicated branch circuit that supplies only that receptacle except that the following items in the bathroom or washroom shall be permitted to be also connected to the circuit:

(A) The lighting;

(B) A fan; and

(C) The motor of a hydromassage bathtub at 750 W or less.

I would like to have 1 last try at this subject before the March 31 deadline. Would all Section 26 members please reply directly to this email before Thursday March 31, indicating whether you agree or not with the submitter's amended proposal above.

Thank you for putting up with my persistence and nagging... we'll take a break after the deadline.

Subcommittee Deliberations (3rd Round)

10 members responded to the email survey with the revised submitter's proposal, 1 agreeing and 9 disagreeing with the latest proposal. Many of those disagreeing (7) also felt that maybe the subject should be closed. Comments ranged as follows:

- If the concern is with tripping, why are we adding outlets to the circuit?
- It seems that a lot of bathrooms are currently being wired as the proposal suggests... why do we need a change?
- This will affect the practice of feeding a number of bathroom receptacles from a single GFCI breaker.
- What happens when we have 2 receptacles in the same bathroom?
- Need to look at the whole concept:
 - Design/performance versus safety
 - We have rules for telephones, lighting switches and receptacles in bathrooms but none for electric baseboards, thermostats, or fan switches

Chair's Comments (3rd Round):

The Chair finds that the SC will not reach a consensus on this subject but does see a consensus to close the subject.

Subcommittee recommendation:

To close the subject.