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**FIRE PREVENTION AND BUILDING SAFETY COMMISSION**  
**Department of Homeland Security**

**Written Interpretation of the State Building Commissioner**

**Interpretation #:** CEB-2019-08-2009 IEC-230.70

**Building or Fire Safety Law Interpreted**

**230.70 General.** Means shall be provided to disconnect all conductors in a building or other structure from the service entrance conductors.

**(A) Location.** The service disconnecting means shall be installed in accordance with 230.70 (A)(1), (A)(2), and (A)(3).

**(1) Readily Accessible Location.** The service disconnecting means shall be installed at a readily accessible location either outside of a building or structure or inside nearest the point of entrance of the service conductors.

**(2) Bathrooms.** Service disconnecting means shall not be installed in bathrooms.

**(3) Remote Control.** Where a remote control device(s) is used to actuate the service disconnecting means, the service disconnecting means shall be located in accordance with 230.70(A)(1).

**Issue**

As it has been explained by the interested person, the local official is requiring a service disconnect on the exterior of the building, and the interested person maintains that is not required when the meter and main panel are installed in a location that is "back-to-back" (as described by the interested person).

**Interpretation of the State Building Commissioner**

A service conductor disconnect is required. It may be located either on the exterior of the building, or in its interior. Interior installations are subject to further requirements for specific location.

**Rationale**

First, it is clear from the language of 230.70 that a means of disconnect is required. Second, it is clear from (A)(1) and (A)(2) that its location may be either on the exterior of the building, or in its interior, though the latter is subject to further location requirements. If interior, the means of disconnect must be located so that it is not in a bathroom, and so that it is both readily accessible, and nearest to the point of the service conductors' entrance. If the service entrance occurs at (i.e., "back-to-back" to) the main panel as described here, and that location is not in a bathroom, then a means of disconnect located at the panel meets the requirements of proximity.

While it is understood that an interior location may be behind a locked door to which the local official has no key, that is not what the code's definition of "readily accessible" refers to. It refers to the ability to reach and operate the equipment without removing or stepping over obstacles or using portable ladders. Access is required for the purposes of shutting off power to the building, and the person requiring that ability need only be the occupant.

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