



CAL FIRE - OFFICE OF THE STATE FIRE MARSHAL

Code Interpretation 25-08

Issued: June 25, 2025

Fire Pump – Jockey or Makeup Pump

OVERVIEW

Edition: 2022 Title 24, California Building Standards (July 2024 Supplement)
Code: Part 2-California Building Code (CBC), Part 3-California Electrical Code (CEC), Part 9-California Fire Code (CFC), NFPA 20-Standard for the Installation of Stationary Pumps for Fire Protection (2022), and NFPA 101-Life Safety Code (2021)
Section(s): CBC 403.4.8.4(6) and 913.6, CFC 913.2, CEC Articles 695.1 (B)(2), 430, 517.35 (B), NFPA 20 3.3.51.15, 4.27, 4.27.9.
Requested By: Fritz Descovich, Codes & Standards Manager PM / Water Based FP Systems Consultant, Allied Fire Protection
Date Received: October 24, 2023

QUESTION #1:

Do Pressure Maintenance Pumps (jockey or make-up) require alternate or standby power?

ANSWER #1:

No. Pressure Maintenance Pumps are used to maintain operating pressure to minimize pressure surges, and they are not essential auxiliary equipment to the fire pumps operation. California Electrical Code Article 695 Fire Pumps refers the installation of pressure maintenance pumps to Article 430 and NFPA 20 which do not require alternate or standby power.

QUESTION #2:

Does NFPA 101 Section 11.8.5.3.4 apply and overrule NFPA 20 Section 4.27.9?

ANSWER #2:

No. SFM does not adopt NFPA 101. CBC 403.4.8.4(6) provide prescriptive requirements specific to new high-rise buildings and Group I-2 occupancies having occupied floors located more than 75 feet above the lowest level of fire department vehicle access which requires alternate or standby power be provided to electrically powered fire pumps. The CEC Section 517 includes specific provisions for Health Care Facilities, which encompasses alternate power sources in Section 517.35 (B), identifying pressure maintenance (jockey or make-up) pumps for water-based fire protection systems. It is important to note that pressure maintenance pumps are not fire pumps.