

Article 9E.

Master Electrical and Natural Gas Meters Prohibited.

§ 143-151.42. Prohibition of master meters for electric and natural gas service.

(a) From and after September 1, 1977, in order that each occupant of an apartment or other individual dwelling unit may be responsible for his own conservation of electricity and gas, it shall be unlawful for any new residential building, as hereinafter defined, to be served by a master meter for electric service or natural gas service. Each individual dwelling unit shall have individual electric service with a separate electric meter and, if it has natural gas, individual natural gas service with a separate natural gas meter, which service and meters shall be in the name of the tenant or other occupant of said apartment or other dwelling unit. No electric supplier or natural gas supplier, whether regulated public utility or municipal corporation or electric membership corporation supplying said utility service, shall connect any residential building for electric service or natural gas service through a master meter, and said electric or natural gas supplier shall serve each said apartment or dwelling unit by separate service and separate meter and shall bill and charge each individual occupant of said separate apartment or dwelling unit for said electric or natural gas service. A new residential building is hereby defined for the purposes of this section as any building for which a building permit is issued on or after September 1, 1977, which includes two or more apartments or other family dwelling units. Provided, however, that any owner or builder of a multi-unit residential building who desires to provide central heat or air conditioning or central hot water from a central furnace, air conditioner or hot water heater which incorporates solar assistance or other designs which accomplish greater energy conservation than separate heat, hot water, or air conditioning for each dwelling unit, may apply to the North Carolina Utilities Commission for approval of said central heat, air conditioning or hot water system, which may include a central meter for electricity or gas used in said central system, and the Utilities Commission shall promptly consider said application and approve it for such central meters if energy is conserved by said design. This section shall apply to any dwelling unit normally rented or leased for a minimum period of one month or longer, including apartments, condominiums and townhouses, but shall not apply to hotels, motels, hotels or motels that have been converted into condominiums, dormitories, rooming houses or nursing homes, or homes for the elderly, or to a multiunit residential building or building complex where natural gas service is delivered to a master meter for use by the occupants of the units for use only in cooking, ventless fireplaces, or other ancillary purposes.

(b) The provisions of this section requiring that service and meters for each individual dwelling unit be in the name of the tenant or other occupant of the apartment or other dwelling unit shall not apply in either of the following circumstances:

- (1) The Utilities Commission has approved an application under subsections (h) through (j) of G.S. 62-110.
- (2) The tenant and landlord have agreed in the lease that the cost of the electric service or natural gas service or both shall be included in the rental payments and the service shall be in the name of the landlord. (1977, c. 792, s. 9; 2007-98, s. 1; 2011-252, s. 5; 2013-168, s. 1; 2021-23, s. 27(c).)