

LOCATION OF SWITCHES NEAR SHOWERS

Question:

This message is in reference to rule 30-326. I believe the intent is that all light switches are meant to be kept out of reach of someone standing in a shower. It has been pointed out to me by a contractor that the rule only refers to switches which control luminaires "installed in damp locations or within 2.5 m vertically or 1.5 m horizontally of laundry tubs, plumbing fixtures, steam pipes, or other grounded metal work or grounded surfaces". His argument was that a person in the shower was unlikely to want to operate a bedroom light switch. The literal interpretation though, seems to allow a switch that controls a bedroom light (or bathroom fan?) to be within reach of a shower, whether it be in the same room or just on the other side of a doorway.

Answer:

Rule 30-326 deals with lighting equipment in damp locations and near grounded metal. A bathroom may be damp and a bathroom may contain grounded metal. A bathroom may not contain grounded equipment, but a bathroom is defined to be a damp location.

Such lighting equipment must be switched; by keyed lampholder or by wall switch. The wall switch must be out of reach of someone in a bathtub or shower.

If one wants to control bathroom lighting equipment from a bedroom, fine. If one wants to control equipment other than that in the bathroom, fine. The clear restriction is that wall switches for lighting equipment in bathrooms must be at least 1 metre from the tub or shower.

To say that a switch controlling lighting equipment must be at least 1 metre from a tub or shower is not to say that a switch not controlling such lighting equipment may be positioned next to a tub or shower.

To say one thing is not necessarily to say another thing. To interpret literally, is to read literally, and not to make inferences that may or may not be hidden beneath the surface of the written text. Inferences that take us beyond the literal meaning may in effect be legislating a new rule.