

## TECHNICAL BULLETIN: 26-011

### Underground Power Requirements - Ordinance 9.48

#### PURPOSE:

The purpose of this bulletin is to provide guidance on the City's underground electrical service requirements for new construction, Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs), and SB 9 units. It clarifies when overhead service drops may be permitted and outlines the applicable ordinances, policies, and exceptions to ensure consistency in plan review, inspection, and coordination with homeowners and Southern California Edison (SCE).

#### DEFINITION:

- **ADU (Accessory Dwelling Unit):** A secondary unit that provides complete independent living facilities for one or more persons and is located on a lot with a proposed or existing primary residence.
- **JADU (junior accessory dwelling unit):** A unit that is no more than 500 square feet in size and contained entirely within a single-family residence.
- **SB 9 Unit:** A **second primary** dwelling unit, distinct from an ADU that is permitted under SB 9 provisions.

**Note:** The City applies these definitions consistently and regulates ADUs, JADUs and SB 9 units differently.

#### City Ordinance Requirements

- **Ordinance 9.48** requires all new developments to provide **underground electrical service** for both new and existing structures.

**Exemptions:** Residential alterations and additions are exempt from this requirement.

#### Policy Adjustment for ADUs

- To reduce burdens on homeowners and SCE, Building & Safety Division allows ADUs and main house to receive up to **two overhead service drops only when the power pole is not located on the project property or public right-of-way (ROW).**

**Important:** This exception applies **only to ADUs**. SB 9 units are treated as new development and always require underground service.

#### Typical Scenarios

1. **New Main House construction:** Underground power is required.
2. **Main House Reconstruction:** If demolition is extensive enough to classify as new construction (see demolition policy), underground power is required.
3. **SB 9 Projects:** Underground power is required.
4. **ADU and JADU Projects (Detached, Attached, or Conversion):**
  - Underground power is required only if:

- Power pole is located on the project property, or within the public ROW on the property's side.
- Existing structure(s) already receives underground electrical service.

5. **ADU + SB 9 Unit Constructed Together:** Underground power is required.

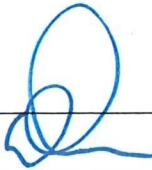
**Conditions for Approving Two Overhead Drops**

1. The power pole must **not be located** on the project property or within the ROW.
2. Service panels must be installed **side-by-side** and as close to the pole as possible to minimize the length of overhead run.
3. Overhead service drop(s) must not cross over any structures.
4. Site plan must show **tentative service panel locations for review and approval**; SCE determines final locations through meter spot process.

**Exceptions**

Exceptions may be considered on a **case-by-case** basis in the following situations:

1. **City Oversight:**
  - Failure to notify the applicant early, and the project is near completion.
2. **SCE Determination:**
  - SCE provides written documentation that underground service is not feasible.
  - Written justification from SCE must be submitted for review and approval by the Chief Building Official or his designate.
3. **Case-by-Case Review:**
  - Requests outside the above categories will be reviewed individually.

<b>Approved:</b> David Dent <i>Deputy Director/Chief Building Official</i>	Signature: 
	Date: 3/11/22