Requirements for the use of long-span cable trays



Overview

Cooper B-Line has recognized the need for a complete cable tray reference source for electrical engineers and designers.

Key Takeaways

Long-span cable trays require careful consideration of support spacing, load capacity, environmental conditions, and compliance with installation standards to ensure safety and reliability.Support Spacing and Span Considerations

Long-span cable trays are typically supported at intervals ranging from 14 to 20 feet, with 20 feet being the most common for industrial and outdoor applications. Extra-long spans may exceed 20 feet, sometimes reaching 20 to 40 feet for outdoor installations such as road crossings, to reduce the number of supports required . The distance between supports directly affects tray strength, so the tray system must be designed to handle the expected load at the chosen span .

Load Capacity

The tray must support both the weight of the cables and any environmental loads, including wind, snow, or ice. Manufacturers provide load tables and specifications to ensure the selected tray can safely carry the intended load over the chosen span . Overloading can lead to structural failure, cable damage, or safety hazards.

Splice Plate Placement

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For long and extra-long spans, splice plate locations are critical. Proper placement ensures structural integrity and prevents sagging or deformation under load. The spacing of splice plates should follow manufacturer guidelines and be coordinated with support intervals .

Material and Environmental Considerations

Cable trays must be selected based on the installation environment. Materials such as galvanized steel, stainless steel, or aluminum are chosen for corrosion resistance, mechanical strength, and compatibility with other metals to prevent galvanic corrosion . Outdoor trays may require additional protection against weather and UV exposure.

Regulatory and Safety Compliance

Installation must comply with OSHA regulations (29 CFR 1910.305) and the National Electrical Code (NEC Section 392.6(C)), which require proper support, mounting, and spacing according to manufacturer instructions . Cable trays are intended to support cables only, not as walkways or ladders, and should be installed by competent personnel familiar with electrical safety standards .

Additional Best Practices
• Anticipate future cable expansion when sizing trays.

• Ensure adequate conductor spacing to prevent overheating.

• Use tested and compatible components to maintain system integrity.

• Consider thermal expansion and contraction in long outdoor runs . By following these requirements, long-span cable trays can provide a safe, reliable, and cost-effective solution for supporting electrical and communication cables in industrial and commercial installations.

Article Content

B-Line series Cable Tray Design Considerations

Cable tray support locations are defined by the NEMA VE-1 and VE-2 Manufacturing & Installation Standards, which specify the

Cable Tray Installation Rules (NEC 392) – Electrical Trader

Generally, standard trays require supports every 6 to 10 feet, while heavy-duty, long-span trays can handle distances

Cable Tray Design: Sizing, Fill, and Support Spacing

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In practice, larger industrial and data center designs typically dedicate entirely separate tray systems to power

Cable Tray Technical Guide A practical guide to product selection

This guide for engineers and installers has been developed by ABB as a practical reference regarding cable tray characteristics,

Fittings LONG SP

Solid bottom tray shall incorporate two side rails connected by solid steel metal. Ladder shall consist of two side-rails with rungs

A Guide to Installing and Supporting Electrical Cable Trays

This guide covers the critical steps, from selecting the right electrical cable tray and performing accurate

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CABLE TRAY SYSTEMS GUIDE

With a support span of 20'' and a total working load of 80 lbs/ft, a NEMA Class 20B tray rated at 75 lbs/ft will not be adequate. A

GUIDE CABLE TRAYS TECHNICAL

Specifies requirements for metal cable trays and associated fittings designed for use in accordance with the rules of Canadian

Cable tray manual

One industry standard that is strongly recommended is that only one cable tray splice be placed between support spans and, for long

Cable Tray Support Spacing: Key Guidelines Explained

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NEMA Standards Publication VE 2-2006

Cable tray systems design shall comply with NEC Article 392, NEMA VE 1, and NEMA FG 1 and follow safe work practices as

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NEMA and NEC Regulations for Cable Tray Requirements

Cable tray use improves system safety by preventing overheating and physical damage to cables. Additionally, cable

IEC Standard for Cable Tray: Complete Technical Guide

It''s not just about regulation—it''s about ensuring long-term efficiency and safety in cable

Load over Span Considerations

In the case of electrical products such as cable tray or ladder (which are load rated in kilograms per metre), the span is the distance

Cable Tray Manual: NEC Article 392 Guide

In-depth guide to cable trays, focusing on NEC Article 392. Covers types, selection, installation, and safety standards for electrical

Cable Tray Load Capacity: Complete Guide for Safe

Learn how Cable Tray Load Capacity is determined by tray type, span distance, material, and cable weight

Wire Mesh Tray Technical Guide

The NEMA VE standard for cable trays is the "product" standard which defines the requirements and tests for cable tray and cable

Cable Tray Installation and Cable Handling Method Statement

Cable Tray Installation Method Statement 1. Cable Tray Installation Cable trays should be installed in accordance with the latest

Full cable tray systems specification document

B. Cable tray systems are defined to include, but are not limited to straight sections of [ladder type] [trough type] [solid bottom type]

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Understanding NEMA Standards for Cable Tray Systems

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Professional recommendation: Start with the environment, then refine by span, load, and

Best Practice Guide to Cable Ladder and Cable Tray Systems

This guide covers cable ladder systems, cable tray systems, channel support systems and associated supports intended for the

Cable Tray Fill Rules (NEC 392)

Cable Tray Fill and Installation per NEC 392 Cable tray types, fill rules for single-conductor and multiconductor

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B-Line series Cable Tray Design Considerations

Note that wider rung spacings and wider cable tray widths decrease the overall strength of the cable tray. Specifiers should be aware

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Not all cable trays are equivalent. The mechanical and electrical characteristics, tests, certifications, overall quality management,

Flextray load and fill recommendations

The NEC rule requires that the cable cross-sectional areas together may not exceed 50% of the tray area (width x depth = fill).

B-Line Cable Tray Design Guide

This document provides guidance on designing cable tray systems for commercial and industrial applications. It discusses key

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Cable Tray Installation Rules (NEC 392) – Electrical Trader

Here''s what you need to know: Cable Types: Only use conductors rated for open-air environments, such as Tray

Cable Tray Installation Guidelines for Engineers

Cable tray elbows shall be supported per NEMA VE 2 requirements. Cable tray supports shall be located so that connectors between

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NEMA VE 1-2017 Specifies requirements for metal cable trays and associated fittings designed for use in accordance with the rules

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