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Once again, The Word invites you to travel into the dark realm of terms that are often misused or misunderstood in home inspection reports. The Word hopes you will find this trip informative and maybe a little entertaining.

The Word's term today is service entrance conductors. The Word finds this term interesting because: (1) our Standards of Practice (Section 7.1.A.2) require that we inspect them, and (2) it is not always clear which, if any, conductors are the service entrance conductors.

Service entrance conductors are those that run between the service point and the service equipment. In order to locate the service entrance conductors, we must first locate these other two components.

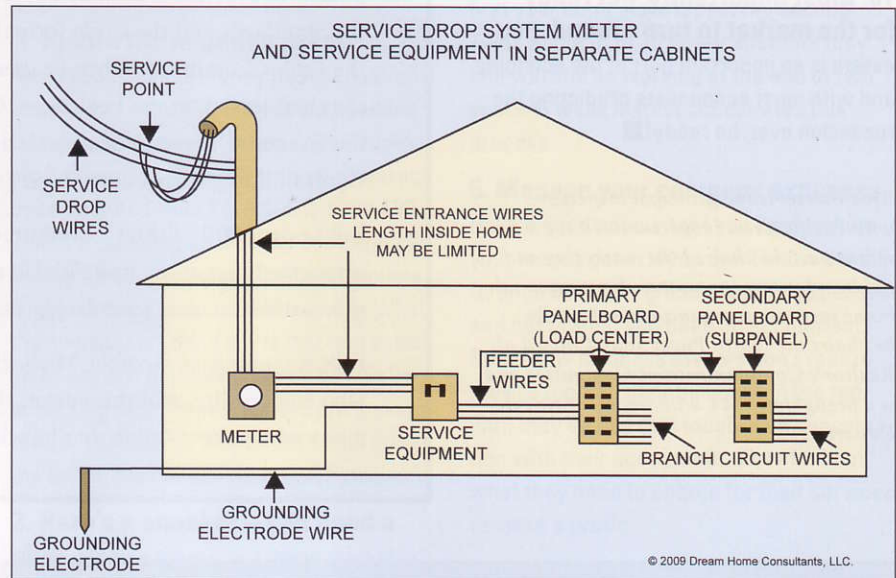
Service equipment

The service equipment consists of not more than six means of disconnecting electrical power to a building. In most homes, these will be circuit breakers or fuses. The service equipment should be readily accessible, listed and labeled for use as service equipment and located not more than 79 inches above the floor or the ground. The service equipment may be inside or outside; but if it's inside, it should be as close as possible to the point where the service entrance conductors enter the home. This avoids a long run of wires unprotected by fuses or circuit breakers. The service equipment is usually easy to locate.

Service point

Locating service point can be a challenge. The service point is where the electric utility's maintenance responsibility ends and the homeowner's responsibility begins. It is anywhere that the electric utility designates. In overhead service drop configurations, the service point is usually at the familiar connectors near the drip loops at the service mast.

But where is the service point in an underground service lateral system? In most residential systems, the logical service point location is at the meter cabinet. The meter cabinet is sealed and often belongs to the electric utility.



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