# How to ground outdoor cable trays



## Overview

All metallic cable trays shall be grounded as required in Article 250.96 regardless of whether or not the cable tray is being used as an equipment grounding conductor (EGC).

## Key Takeaways

Outdoor cable trays should be grounded using metallic connections to earth, with proper conductors and clamps to ensure safety, prevent corrosion, and comply with NEC standards.

### Key Principles of Grounding Outdoor Cable Trays

Purpose of Grounding: Grounding provides a safe path for stray electrical currents, preventing electric shocks, equipment damage, and fire hazards. It also reduces electrical noise and static interference in sensitive installations. Use of Cable Tray as Grounding Conductor: Metal cable trays can serve as the equipment grounding conductor (EGC) if they meet conductivity and cross-sectional area requirements.

Steel trays are suitable for circuits with ground-fault protection up to 600 A, while aluminum trays are limited to 2000 A. Non-metallic trays cannot be used as grounding conductors.

### Steps to Ground Outdoor Cable Trays

Select Appropriate Grounding Conductor: Use copper or tinned copper wires for aluminum trays to prevent electrolytic corrosion. Hot-dip galvanized steel or stainless steel can be used for harsh outdoor environments. Install Grounding Conductors: Run a continuous grounding wire along the length of the tray or use the tray itself as the grounding path if it meets NEC requirements.

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Connect the grounding wire to each tray section using grounding clamps or lugs. Flexible jumpers may be used at joints to maintain electrical continuity. Bond Tray Sections: Ensure all tray sections are electrically bonded.

This can be done with bolted or welded connections using tin- or zinc-plated connectors for aluminum trays. Remove insulation at bonding points to ensure a solid metal-to-metal connection. Connect to Earth Ground: Attach the grounding conductor to a properly installed earth ground, such as a ground rod or grounding grid, ensuring low resistance (ideally ≤ 4 ohms) for effective fault current dissipation.

Prevent Corrosion: Avoid bare copper in aluminum trays; use insulated conductors with exposed ends at bonding points. Use corrosion-resistant clamps and connectors suitable for outdoor exposure. Compliance and Safety Checks: Follow NEC Article 250 and 392 for grounding and bonding requirements.

Verify continuity and resistance of the grounding system before energizing the installation.

### Additional Considerations

Distance Between Grounding Points: For long outdoor runs, install grounding points at regular intervals to maintain low impedance. Environmental Protection: Ensure grounding connections are protected from moisture, UV exposure, and mechanical damage. Maintenance: Periodically inspect clamps, conductors, and tray sections for corrosion or loose connections.

By following these steps, outdoor cable trays can be safely grounded, minimizing electrical hazards and ensuring compliance with electrical codes while maintaining system reliability.

## Article Content

Practices for grounding and bonding of cable trays

All metallic cable trays shall be grounded as required in Article 250.96 regardless of whether or not the cable tray is being used as an equipment grounding conductor (EGC).

Cable Tray Grounding Wire: What You Need to Know

Discover the best practices for Cable Tray Grounding Wire installation. Learn key requirements, safety tips, and material choices to ensure a

The Importance of Grounding in Cable Trays and How to Do It?

Grounding in cable trays is an important practice to increase electrical safety and prevent hazards in case of faults. The methods and materials used may vary depending on the structure of

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Grounding Aluminum Cable Trays Outdoors Best Practices

Learn best practices for grounding aluminum cable trays outdoors. Prevent corrosion, electrical shock hazards, and equipment damage by understanding proper g...

How to Ground a Cable Tray According to NEC Standards

Get tips on how to ground a cable tray for safe, NEC-compliant installations, from grounding wire size to bonding jumpers.

Cable Tray Installation Rules (NEC 392) – Electrical Trader

Core rules for selecting, installing, grounding, and filling cable trays—clearances, materials, separation, and bonding explained.

NEC Standards for Cable Trays: Grounding, Fill Capacity

This article provides a comprehensive framework that governs various aspects of cable tray installations, including the types of cables that are deemed acceptable for use, requirements for

Grounding cable trays: requirements, norms, instructions

Now you know how to ground cable trays and what requirements you need to consider when organizing this kind of protection. We hope the information was useful and understandable to you!

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Outdoor Fiber Optic Cable Types Compared - Choosing the right fiber optic cable for an outdoor run isn''t like picking an indoor patch cord.

How to Fix Common Cable Management Issues using

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How to Choose Cable Tray for High Voltage System

Selecting a cable tray for high voltage power cables is a critical engineering decision that directly impacts system safety, thermal performance,

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Cable Trays | Cable Management Systems | Snake Tray

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Common Cable Tray Failures and How to Resolve Them

Learn about common cable tray failures, their causes, and practical solutions for ensuring the longevity and safety of your cable tray system,

Aluminium Cable Trays | EAE Electric

Yes, grounding is necessary for aluminium cable trays. Due to aluminium''s high electrical conductivity, a secure grounding system prevents electrical leaks and

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