

Lock-out, tag-out saves lives

Purpose

This Safety Alert is issued to highlight the potential hazard of electrocution whilst engaging in work requiring a lock out procedure to be implemented.

Strict adherence to electrical lock out procedures may become lax for a variety of reasons. The acceptance of substandard practices puts workers at an unacceptable level of risk.

Electrical workers have specific obligations under the *Electricity Reform Act* and Electricity Reform (Safety and Technical) Regulations. Further, there are obligations for all employers and workers under the *Workplace Health and Safety Act 2007*.

Occupational Health and Safety risk associated with electrical works being conducted is often assessed as HIGH and employers and those in control of the workplace are required by law to take active steps to control that risk.

Recommendations

Identify all hazards from work, which may affect the health and safety of a worker, and any other person who could be affected by the work.

Where isolation is required for electrical works being conducted and there are persons present who are of non-English speaking background or English as a second language, then this should be identified as a hazard and steps taken to eliminate this hazard.

Under these circumstances, all points of isolation should be locked off where possible. Switches used for isolation should be provided with a device for securing the switch in the open position that requires a deliberate action to engage or disengage it. The securing device need not be an integral part of the switch and should be an additional component such as a padlock that will prevent the switch from being operated.

Conduct a risk assessment. The following are the principles for reducing injury risk in any workplace. They are also what the *Workplace Health and Safety Act* and Workplace Health and Safety Regulations require.

1. Elimination of the hazard
2. Substitution for a hazard of lesser risk
3. Other engineering measures to prevent injury
4. Safety rules
5. Personal protective equipment

Where possible, an injury risk must be eliminated, or removed from the workplace. This is obviously the most effective way to reduce risk. While it is often not possible to eliminate a particular hazard, the law requires that, as an employer, you must at least think about elimination as the first option.

The more effective controls must always be considered first. In practice, best practice in OHS risk management will require a mix of the above measures, however consider that recommendation 1 is the highest form of control and recommendation 5 the lowest.



putting safety first >

Legislative requirements

[Electricity Reform \(Safety and Technical\) Regulations:](#)

- Regulation 7. Compliance with Provisions of this Part [Part 4] and Parts 5 and 6
- Regulation 8. Basic safety principle
- Regulation 9. Application of Division
- Regulation 10. Safe work practices
- Regulation 11. Work involving danger of direct contact with live conductors, etc.
- Regulation 12. Work in proximity to exposed conductors, etc.

[Workplace Health and Safety Act:](#)

- Section 55. Employer's general statutory duty of care

[Workplace Health and Safety Regulations:](#)

- Regulation 38. Hazard identification and risk assessment
- Regulation 39. Risk management

AS/NZS 3000:2000 Wiring Rules:

- 2.3.2.2 Devices for isolation
- 2.9.5.2 Relationship of electrical equipment

AS/NZS 4836:2001 Safe working on low voltage electrical installations:

- 3.2.2.3 Isolation of electrical equipment
- 3.2.2.4 Secure the isolation
- 3.2.2.5 Tags – General
- 3.2.2.6 Danger tags
- 3.2.2.7 Warning tags
- 3.2.2.8 Removal of tags
- 3.2.2.9 Proving de-energization

Further information

Additional information on this issue or other safety matters is available at NT WorkSafe:

GPO Box 1722 Darwin NT 0801

Telephone: 1800 019 115 ♦ Facsimile: (08) 8999 5141 ♦ Email: ntworksafe@nt.gov.au

Website: worksafe.nt.gov.au