

Chapter 19 ELECTRICAL SAFETY (QUALIFIED AND NON-QUALIFIED)

PURPOSE

Certain hazards exist in the sign industry related to the use of electricity to energize signage. These hazards can be debilitating or fatal unless employees responsible for handling electricity are properly trained in safe handling procedures. Safety-related work practices shall be employed to prevent electric shock or other injuries resulting from either direct or indirect electrical contacts, when work is performed near or on equipment or circuits which are or may be energized. The specific safety-related work practices shall be consistent with the nature and extent of the associated electrical hazards.

RESPONSIBILITY AND TRAINING

The Install Supervisor is responsible for training of personnel who face a risk of electric shock, but are not qualified persons. All production, installation and service personnel shall be trained in and familiar with electrically related safety practices, and safety-related work practices that pertain to their respective job assignments. Unqualified persons must be familiar with safe clearance distances.

Qualified persons face a risk of electric shock, that is not reduced to a safe level. In addition to the training requirements of the unqualified persons, all qualified production, installation and service personnel shall receive the following additional training:

1. The skills and techniques necessary to distinguish exposed live parts from other parts of electric equipment.
2. The skills and techniques necessary to determine the nominal voltage of exposed live parts.
3. The clearance distances specified in OSHA Section 1910.333(c) and the corresponding voltages to which the qualified person will be exposed.

Employees in occupations listed in Table S-4 face such a risk and are required to be trained. Other employees who also may reasonably be expected to face comparable risk of injury due to electric shock or other electrical hazards must also be trained.

TABLE S-4. -- Typical Occupational Categories of Employees
Facing a Higher Than Normal Risk of Electrical Accident

Occupation
Blue collar supervisors(1)
Electrical and electronic engineers(1)
Electrical and electronic equipment assemblers(1)
Electrical and electronic technicians(1)
Electricians
Industrial machine operators(1)
Material handling equipment operators(1)
Mechanics and repairers(1)
Painters(1)
Riggers and roustabouts(1)
Stationary engineers(1)
Welders

Footnote(1) Workers in these groups do not need to be trained if their work or the work of those they supervise does not bring them or the employees they supervise close enough to exposed parts of electric circuits operating at 50 volts or more to ground for a hazard to exist.

SAFETY GUIDELINES

Live parts to which an employee may be exposed shall be de-energized before the employee works on or near them, unless the supervisor can demonstrate that de-energizing introduces additional or increased hazards or is infeasible due to equipment design or operational limitations. Live parts that operate at less than 50 volts to ground need not be de-energized if there will be no increased exposure to electrical burns or to explosion due to electric arcs.

Examples of increased or additional hazards include interruption of life support equipment, deactivation of emergency alarm systems, shutdown of hazardous location ventilation equipment, or removal of illumination for an area.

Examples of work that may be performed on or near energized circuit parts because of infeasibility due to equipment design or operational limitations include testing of electric circuits that can only be performed with the circuit energized and work on circuits that form an integral part of a continuous industrial process in a chemical plant that would otherwise need to be completely shut down in order to permit work on one circuit or piece of equipment.

If the exposed live parts are not de-energized (i.e., for reasons of increased or additional hazards or infeasibility), other safety-related work practices shall be used to protect employees who may be exposed to the electrical hazards involved. Such work practices shall protect employees against contact with energized circuit parts directly with any part of their body or indirectly through some other conductive object. The work practices that are used shall be suitable for the conditions under which the work is to be performed and for the voltage level of the exposed electric conductors or circuit parts.

WORKING ON OR NEAR EXPOSED DE-ENERGIZED PARTS

This section applies to work on exposed deenergized parts or near enough to them to expose the employee to any electrical hazard they present. Conductors and parts of electric equipment that have been deenergized but have not been locked out or tagged in accordance with the Lock Out section (following) shall be treated as energized parts, and the section on Working On or Near Exposed Energized Parts applies to work on or near them.

While any employee is exposed to contact with parts of fixed electric equipment or circuits which have been de-energized, the circuits energizing the parts shall be locked out or tagged or both.

Safe procedures for de-energizing circuits and equipment shall be determined before circuits or equipment are de-energized. The circuits and equipment to be worked on shall be disconnected from all electric energy sources. Control circuit devices, such as push buttons, selector switches, and interlocks, may not be used as the sole means for de-energizing circuits or equipment. Interlocks for electric equipment may not be used as a substitute for lockout and tagging procedures.

STORED ENERGY

Stored electric energy which might endanger personnel shall be released. Capacitors shall be discharged and high capacitance elements shall be short-circuited and grounded, if the stored electric energy might endanger personnel. Stored non-electrical energy such as steam, hydraulic, gravity, kinetic energy, etc. in devices that could re-energize electric circuit parts shall be blocked or relieved to the extent that the circuit parts could not be accidentally energized by the device.

APPLICATION OF LOCKS AND TAGS

A lock and a tag shall be placed on each disconnecting means used to de-energize circuits and equipment on which work is to be performed. The lock shall be attached so as to prevent persons from operating the disconnecting means unless they resort to undue force or the use of tools. Each tag shall contain a statement prohibiting unauthorized operation of the disconnecting means and removal of the tag. If a lock cannot be applied, or if the supervisor can demonstrate that tagging procedures will provide a level of safety equivalent to that obtained by the use of a lock, a tag may be used without a lock.

A tag used without a lock shall be supplemented by at least one additional safety measure that provides a level of safety equivalent to that obtained by use of a lock ie. the removal of an isolating circuit element, blocking of a controlling switch, opening of an extra disconnecting device, etc.

A lock may be placed without a tag only under the following conditions:

2. Only one circuit or piece of equipment is de-energized
3. The lockout period does not extend beyond the work shift
4. Employees exposed to the hazards associated with re-energizing the circuit or equipment are familiar with this procedure.

A qualified person shall operate the equipment operating controls or otherwise verify that the equipment cannot be restarted. A qualified person shall use test equipment to test the circuit elements and electrical parts of equipment to which employees will be exposed and shall verify that the circuit elements and equipment parts are de-energized. The test shall also determine if any energized condition exists as a result of inadvertently induced voltage or unrelated voltage backfeed even though specific parts of the circuit have been de-energized and presumed to be safe. If the circuit to be tested is over 600 volts, nominal, the test equipment shall be checked for proper operation immediately after this test.

RE-ENERGIZING EQUIPMENT

Before circuits or equipment are re-energized, even temporarily, a qualified person shall conduct tests and visual inspections, as necessary, to verify that all tools, electrical jumpers, shorts, grounds, and other such devices have been removed, so that the circuits and equipment can be safely energized. Employees exposed to the hazards associated with re-energizing the circuit or equipment shall be warned to stay clear of circuits and equipment.

Each lock and tag shall be removed by the employee who applied it or under his or her direct supervision. However, if this employee is absent from the workplace, then the lock or tag may be removed by a qualified person designated to perform this task provided that:

1. The supervisor ensures that the employee who applied the lock or tag is not available at the workplace.
2. The supervisor ensures that the employee is aware that the lock or tag has been removed before he or she resumes work at that workplace.

There shall be a visual determination that all employees are clear of the circuits and equipment.

WORKING ON OR NEAR EXPOSED ENERGIZED PARTS

Working on or near exposed parts applies to work involving either direct contact of by means of tools or materials, or near enough to them for employees to be exposed to any hazard they present.

Only qualified persons may work on electric circuit parts or equipment that have not been de-energized. Such persons shall be capable of working safely on energized circuits and shall be familiar with the proper use of special precautionary techniques, personal protective equipment, insulating and shielding materials, and insulated tools.

If work is to be performed near overhead lines, the lines shall be de-energized and grounded, or other protective measures shall be provided before work is started. If the lines are to be de-energized, arrangements shall be made with the person or organization that operates or controls the electric circuits involved to de-energize and ground them. If protective measures, such as guarding, isolating, or insulating, are provided, these precautions shall prevent employees from contacting such lines directly with any part of their body or indirectly through conductive materials, tools, or equipment.

OVERHEAD LINES - UNQUALIFIED

When an unqualified person is working in an elevated position near overhead lines, the location shall be such that the person and the longest conductive object he or she may contact cannot come closer to any unguarded, energized overhead line than the following distances:

1. For voltages to ground 50kV or below - 10 feet
2. For voltages to ground over 50kV - 10 feet plus 4 inches for every 10kV over 50kV.

When an unqualified person is working on the ground in the vicinity of overhead lines, the person may not bring any conductive object closer to unguarded, energized overhead lines than these distances. For voltages normally encountered with overhead power line, objects which do not have an insulating rating for the voltage involved are considered to be conductive.

OVERHEAD LINES - QUALIFIED

When a qualified person is working in the vicinity of overhead lines, whether in an elevated position or on the ground, the person may not approach or take any conductive object without an approved insulating handle closer to exposed energized parts than shown in the following table:

**APPROACH DISTANCES FOR QUALIFIED
EMPLOYEES - ALTERNATING CURRENT**

Voltage range (phase to phase)	Minimum approach distance
300V and less	Avoid Contact
Over 300V, not over 750V	1 ft. 0 in. (30.5 cm).
Over 750V, not over 2kV	1 ft. 6 in. (46 cm).
Over 2kV, not over 15kV	2 ft. 0 in. (61 cm).
Over 15kV, not over 37kV	3 ft. 0 in. (91 cm).
Over 37kV, not over 87.5kV	3 ft. 6 in. (107 cm).
Over 87.5kV, not over 121kV	4 ft. 0 in. (122 cm)
Over 121kV, not over 140kV	4 ft. 6 in. (137 cm)

VEHICULAR AND MECHANICAL EQUIPMENT

Any vehicle or mechanical equipment capable of having parts of its structure elevated near energized overhead lines shall be operated so that a clearance of 10 ft. is maintained. If the voltage is higher than 50kV, the clearance shall be increased 4 in. for every 10kV over that voltage. However, under any of the following conditions, the clearance may be reduced:

1. If the vehicle is in transit with its structure lowered, the clearance may be reduced to 4 ft. (122 cm). If the voltage is higher than 50kV, the clearance shall be increased 4 in. (10 cm) for every 10 kV over that voltage.
2. If insulating barriers are installed to prevent contact with the lines, and if the barriers are rated for the voltage of the line being guarded and are not a part of or an attachment to the vehicle or its raised structure, the clearance may be reduced to a distance within the designed working dimensions of the insulating barrier.
3. If the equipment is an aerial lift insulated for the voltage involved, and if the work is performed by a qualified person, the clearance (between the uninsulated portion of the aerial lift and the power line) may be reduced to the distance given in the previous Approach Distances for Qualified Employees - Alternating Current Table.

Employees standing on the ground may not contact the vehicle or mechanical equipment or any of its attachments, unless:

1. The employee is using protective equipment rated for the voltage.
2. The equipment is located so that no uninsulated part of its structure (that portion of the structure that provides a conductive path to employees on the ground) can come closer to the line than 10 ft. If the voltage is higher than 50kV, the clearance shall be increased 4 in. for every 10kV over that voltage.

If any vehicle or mechanical equipment capable of having parts of its structure elevated near energized overhead lines is intentionally grounded, employees working on the ground near the point of grounding may not stand at the grounding location whenever there is a possibility of overhead line contact. Additional precautions, such as the use of barricades or insulation, shall be taken to protect employees from hazardous ground potentials, depending on earth resistivity and fault currents, which can develop within the first few feet or more outward from the grounding point.

ILLUMINATION

Employees may not enter spaces containing exposed energized parts, unless illumination is provided that enables the employees to perform the work safely. Where lack of illumination or an obstruction precludes observation of the work to be performed, employees may not perform tasks near exposed energized parts. Employees may not reach blindly into areas which may contain energized parts.

When an employee works in a confined or enclosed space (such as a manhole or vault) that contains exposed energized parts, the employee shall use, protective shields, protective barriers, or insulating materials as necessary to avoid inadvertent contact with these parts. Doors, hinged panels, and the like shall be secured to prevent their swinging into an employee and causing the employee to contact exposed energized parts.

CONDUCTIVE MATERIALS AND EQUIPMENT

Conductive materials and equipment that are in contact with any part of an employee's body shall be handled in a manner that will prevent them from contacting exposed energized conductors or circuit parts. If an employee must handle long dimensional conductive objects (such as ducts and pipes) in areas with exposed live parts, the employer shall institute work practices (such as the use of insulation, guarding, and material handling techniques) which will minimize the hazard.

Portable ladders shall have nonconductive siderails if they are used where the employee or the ladder could contact exposed energized parts.

Conductive articles of jewelry and clothing (such as watch bands, bracelets, rings, key chains, necklaces, metalized aprons, cloth with conductive thread, or metal headgear) may not be worn if they might contact exposed energized parts. However, such articles may be worn if they are rendered nonconductive by covering, wrapping, or other insulating means.

Where live parts present an electrical contact hazard, employees may not perform housekeeping duties at such close distances to the parts that there is a possibility of contact, unless adequate safeguards (such as insulating equipment or barriers) are provided. Electrically conductive cleaning materials (including conductive solids such as steel wool, metalized cloth, and silicon carbide, as well as conductive liquid solutions) may not be used in proximity to energized parts unless procedures are followed which will prevent electrical contact.

INTERLOCKS

Only a qualified person following proper procedure may defeat an electrical safety interlock, and then only temporarily while he or she is working on the equipment. The interlock system shall be returned to its operable condition when this work is completed.