

ASP Safety Alert

Electrical Safety & Authorisations



Alert Number: G16_18

**Subject: Electrical Contractors Injured
22/11/2018**

ASPs, electrical contractors and others are urged to consider the risks associated with working on or near exposed live conductors when planning and undertaking their work.

No one should risk their life, or the lives of work mates, for the sake of saving time or inconvenience.

Ausgrid recognises that many of our ASPs are also Electrical Contractors, and requests that you share this alert within your businesses and with your peers within the industry.

Description of incident or hazard:

On 8 November 2018, two electrical contractors were seriously injured from an arc flash whilst working on a customer's 3000 Amp main switchboard supplied directly from an Ausgrid substation.

Extent of impact:

- An arcing fault occurred between the customers Service Protective Device and a downstream unmetered circuit breaker. Initial investigations indicate the workers were attempting to install cables that were to supply a separate meter panel. While doing this work a short circuit occurred which initiated the arcing fault.
- The customers Service Protective Device failed to operate.
- The two transformer circuit breakers inside the Ausgrid substation operated isolating supply.
- There were approximately 330 people without power in the complex.
- Both victims received significant burns because of an arc flash and were taken to hospital.

Immediate action taken (or to be taken) to eliminate or control the risk:

Ausgrid is co-operating with SafeWork NSW to determine the exact cause of the accident.

Reminder regarding electrical contracting work

It is important that ASPs who perform electrical contracting work are familiar with the different requirements in legislation that apply. Electrical Contractors are required to manage the risks associated with electrical work, in accordance with the Work Health & Safety Regulation 2017 – Div 4. For further information, please also refer to the Safework Code of Practice – Managing Electrical Risk in the Workplace. Link provided below.

Concerning practices within the industry have been identified by industry regulators such as the willingness of the electrical contracting industry to perform live electrical work. These practices appear to be particularly prevalent in the commercially-driven electrical contracting sector.

Electrical Contractors often report experiencing pressure from business clients to work live to avoid disruptions to trade or production. Clients and some Electrical Contractors often don't fully appreciate the risks and catastrophic consequences associated with working live. Electrical Contractors are urged to look for alternatives to working live, such as scheduling works during hours where the power supply can be shut down.

ASP Authorisation

ASPs must ensure that they are aware that the provisions associated with live work only apply when they are working under their ASP authorisation. This is only when conducting contestable service works covered under the ASP Scheme Rules and Ausgrid's Electrical Safety Rules, when supported by their Safety Management Systems.

Ausgrid reminds all ASPs to work within the requirements of their Authorisation and Safety Management Systems, as described in ES4 – Accredited Service Provider Authorisation. ASPs are responsible for the safety of their employees and the public whilst carrying out contestable work. It is essential that authorised work is performed in a safe manner to the minimum standards as specified in Ausgrid's:

- Electrical Safety Rules;
- Network Standards;
- Electrical Standards; and
- Policies relating to contestable work and safe work practices.

For further information please don't hesitate to contact Ausgrid at either Level1ASP@ausgrid.com.au or ASPLevel2@ausgrid.com.au.

Ausgrid

Project Officers

Links:

http://www.safework.nsw.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0010/50230/managing-electrical-risks-code-practice-0916.pdf