

ELECTRICAL SAFETY

Make It Your Priority!



Electrical Safety – Make It Your Priority!

This leaflet is aimed at employers and employees involved in the electrical industry including electrical contractors, electricians and apprentice electricians. A large proportion of electrical accidents happen to persons who are 'electrically skilled', working on equipment falsely thought to be dead.

If you have suffered an electric shock, it's a matter of chance, rather than judgement that you are alive. In the UK, over 1,000 accidents at work involving electric shock or burns are reported, with around 30 of these being fatal. In a recent survey of second year electrical apprentices in Northern Ireland, over one third claimed to have experienced at least one work-based electric shock since starting their apprenticeship. What lies behind this statistic? It can only be that contractors and qualified electricians are not ensuring safety standards are being met.



An electric shock should not be accepted as an occupational hazard

Sustaining an electric shock should not be seen as 'part of the job' or something that is inevitable for electricians and those who work within the electrical industry. The effects of an electric shock can vary from a slight tingle to immediate cardiac arrest.



Find out what happens on the ground

Employers must embed the established standards of achieving safe isolation and





check what is physically being carried out on the ground. It is unacceptable to leave individual employees or apprentices to their own devices.

Consequences of getting it wrong

If you are an employer and your employee is killed or seriously injured in the course of their work, not only will it be devastating for all concerned, it is very likely that you will face prosecution.



Simple measures that can save lives

Electricians and their employers need to take proactive steps to change this culture of

Recent Incidents

"I was replacing a breaker in an industrial panel. It was awkward to get to and my screwdriver slipped off on to the live busbar and the mounting plate. There was a huge flash and I got severe burns to my neck and forearms. I have worked in the industry for over 20 years and never had an accident before."

John, Belfast

"I had just started my apprenticeship, my boss told me to put up a new light fitting and that he had isolated at the distribution board. When I took the first wire out of the terminal I got a severe jolt which knocked me off the ladder. Someone had switched the power back on. It hadn't been locked off."

Norman, Co.Down

"I asked my supervisor if the power was off before I started to strip out the old wiring. He said he thought so but just to be careful."

Stephen, Co.Antrim

acceptance that electric shocks and burns are unavoidable. Procedures for safe working with electricity are well known and documented.



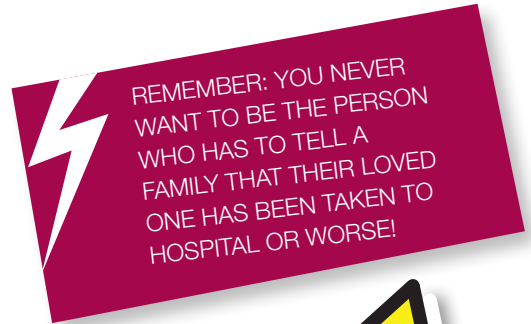
- Ensure that staff have sufficient technical knowledge and experience to perform their job safely.
- Ensure that the necessary equipment to do the job safely is provided, i.e. voltage detection equipment, lock-off devices, tags and signs, etc. Test equipment must be reliable and robust (see HSE document GS38).
- Check that safe isolation procedures are being followed. Adequate supervision should be provided to both 'competent' electricians and apprentices.
- Review and amend safe systems of work by involving employees to ensure that the methods to be used are practicable on the ground.
- Investigate near miss incidents so that incidents may be avoided in the future where someone could be injured or killed.
- Lead by example, demonstrate your commitment and provide clear direction by following safe systems of work – let everyone know that health and safety is important.





Your last line of defence is
proving dead at the point
of work

Working live or near live equipment is almost
never an acceptable option.



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