



Safety Message of the Day for IMEA Members



De-energizing a System Safety Message

Many utilities have developed specific switching procedures for specific de-energizing tasks. These procedures are typically very detailed, including the confirmation and verification of commands received via radio to crews at remote locations. Many utilities have a center from which all transmission and distribution operations are controlled by what OSHA calls a "system operator." Before beginning work, and as part of the job briefing, the person in charge at the work site must review the isolation steps with all workers that will be doing the work. **[See Hazard Assessment and Job Briefing]** When field workers need to de-energize T&D lines or equipment for work.

Step 1 The field worker designated to be in charge of clearance formally requests that the system operator de-energize the particular lines or equipment.

Step 2 All possible source connections through which energy could flow (including back-feed) are identified by a 269-qualified person, opened/operated in a proper sequence, rendered inoperable, and tagged [LOTO Generation] by the system operator. (This step is sometimes referred to as development of a "switching order.")

Step 3 The system operator directs field personnel to lock in the open position (such as locking the handle for a pole-mounted, gang-operated load break switch) or otherwise render inoperable (such as removing a switch handle) any switching device that could be accessed by anyone not under that employer's control – such as the general public.

Step 4 The system operator disables and tags automatic devices, such as reclosers and sectionalizers, and sets remote-controlled switching devices to local control and tags them. (See Disabling Reclosers and Remotely Operated Devices.)

Step 5 After completing all of the above steps the system operator notifies the person in charge, and the lines and equipment to be worked on must be properly tested by field personnel to ensure they are deenergized.

Step 6 **Protective grounds must then be installed** in the appropriate sequence and as otherwise required by 1910.269(n). (See Grounding for Employee Protection.)

Discussion Point:

Discuss your specific utility procedures.