



ETU OHS NEWSLETTER

FEBRUARY 2006

SAFETY ALERT FROM ENERGY SAFE VICTORIA (SUMMARY)

WARNING WHEN WORKING ON LIVE LOW VOLTAGE EQUIPMENT IN SUBSTATIONS

Energy Safe Victoria (ESV) is warning lineworkers to ensure that all safety precautions are followed when working on live low voltage equipment within substations.

ESV is investigating an incident which occurred on 17 January 2006 where a Powercor line-worker received extensive burns to his face while working within a kiosk substation at Shepparton. He is reported to be in a stable condition in the Alfred Hospital.

Initial investigations by ESV revealed that the injuries were caused when the worker was attempting to place clamp-on current transformers (CT) on the busbar between the low voltage terminals of a transformer and the low voltage fuses.

Following the incident, ESV issued a direction under Section 141 (2) of the Electricity Safety Act 1998 preventing Powercor employees from working on any live electrical equipment between the low voltage switch gear of a kiosk substation without the electricity supply being isolated from the electrical equipment and the equipment earthed.

The direction will remain in force until ESV is satisfied that Powercor have demonstrated that appropriate safety procedures are in place, and all the company's electrical staff have an understanding of the procedures and have been provided with appropriate refresher training.

Director of Energy Safety, Ken Gardner, said while Powercor had been issued with the direction,

the message about safe work practices involving live electrical equipment within kiosk substations and other installations applied to all network operators and their employees.

ESV stresses that Section 43(4) of the Electricity Safety Act requires that a person carrying out electrical work must ensure that all electrical circuits and electrical equipment handled in the course of this work is disconnected from electricity supply, or adequate precautions are taken to prevent electric shock or other injury in the handling of electrical circuits or electrical equipment involved in the work.

To see the full Safety Alert go to www.esv.vic.gov.au/alerts/sa37.pdf

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OHS Reps Meetings 2006 10am-12pm

- 22nd February - Melbourne
- 29th March-ETU Geelong
- 26th April-Melbourne
- 31st May-ETU Morwell
- 28th June-Melbourne
- 26th July-Trades and Labour Portland
- 30th August-Melbourne
- 27th Sept-Trades and Labour Shepparton
- 25th October-Melbourne
- 29th November-ETU Geelong
- December tbc-Melbourne

NOT JUST A VOICE IN THE WILDERNESS

Many OHS Representatives must sometimes feel like a voiced in the wilderness trying to get health and safety issues resolved.

They need to remember that they are not alone in this enterprise. The Union has dedicated people assisting them in their endeavour to better safety in the workplace. The Union has an OHS Officer (Allan Mulvena) as well as the

Organisers, to assist in safety matters. Union Organisers have been trained and assessed to operate as ARREOs (Authorised Representatives for Registered Employee Organisations).

It is quite often that the OHS Rep is being thwarted at every turn. This is when the Rep most needs assistance. The Rep must advise the Union when this occurs or else no-one will know about the

issue or be able to provide assistance to the Rep.

On many occasions, the problem stems from the Rep being given misinformation. This then has the consequence of stressing out the Rep and leaving them bewildered and frustrated.

As the Rep you have the right to request assistance when you need it. **Exercise that right.**

SAFETY IN ACTION—TRADE SHOW

Yes, it's on again, Australia's PREMIER workplace health & safety Trade Show.

Safety In Action / Materials & Manual Handling 2006 will be held at Melbourne Exhibition Centre, Southbank, Melbourne from Tuesday 16 - Thursday 18 May 2006.

In excess of 9,500 quality trade visitors and Conference delegates from a broad range of industries attended SAFETY IN ACTION / MATERIALS & MANUAL HANDLING 2005.

Record attendances at last year's trade show were drawn by thousands of safety solutions under one roof and a host of new interactive events.

Held at the Melbourne Exhibition Centre, the three-day occupational health and safety event attracted more than 9500 trade visits, representing a 15% increase over last year's record crowd.

Specialist safety tours,

interactive demonstrations, a question and answer panel, WorkSafe seminars and two industry functions were highlights of the eighth Safety In Action and Materials & Manual Handling trade show. Around 300 exhibitors and the attendances by occupational health and safety professionals, managers and technical professions reinforced its status as Victoria's largest OHS event.

For those OHS Representatives that wish to attend the Trade

Show, go to the web site listed below to register your interest in attending.

www.safetyinaction.net.au

The Safety in Action Show provides Reps with up to date information about products that are available in a range of different areas.



TOBACCO REFORMS

New tobacco laws were passed by Parliament on 10 August 2005 and will take effect from 1 March 2006 and 1 July 2007.

From 1 March 2006 the new laws will:

- ban smoking in most enclosed workplaces;
- ban smoking, the promotion of tobacco products and the sale of tobacco products at underage 'music/dance' events;

- ban smoking in covered areas of train station platforms, tram shelters and bus shelters;
- ban 'buzz marketing' and non-branded tobacco advertising; and
- strengthen laws to enforce the ban on cigarette sales to young people.

From 1 July 2007 the new laws will ban smoking in enclosed licensed premises.

As identified in the first dot point, the new laws will have an impact on enclosed workplaces. Enclosed workplaces have been defined as:

Enclosed means an area, room or premises that is or are substantially enclosed by a roof and walls, regardless of whether the roof or walls or any part of them are:

- permanent or temporary;
- open or closed.

It has also been clarified that it is irrelevant whether the workplace has an open roller door as to whether the legislation applies or not.

This legislation will have a particular impact on construction workplaces.

For further information visit:

<http://www.health.vic.gov.au/tobaccoreforms/>

FAULTY ELECTRICAL EQUIPMENT LEADS TO TRAGEDY

The following is a summary from a media Release issued on the 4th January 2006:

Energy Safe Victoria urges the community to check electrical equipment prior to use to ensure it is safe.

The warning was issued following an incident that led to the death of a man on Christmas Day—5 weeks after receiving a severe electric shock in the home while

using a welder which was later found to be faulty.

Director of Energy Safety, Mr Ken Gardner, said the tragic incident sent a clear warning to all members of the community.

"Whether using a welder or a hairdryer, electrical appliances should not be operated when they show signs of damage or deterioration".

"It is important that such equipment as electrical leads, tools and equipment be visually inspected for damage before each use. If there is any doubt, they should be checked for safety by a registered electrical contractor, licensed electrician or reputable appliance repairer. If there is any doubt—don't risk it. Discard the equipment in question and make sure that it

cannot be recycled in any way. The simple message is: never use damaged or modified electrical equipment".

This is a timely reminder, that all electrical shocks should be reported and assessed by a medical practitioner and that all electrical equipment is to be inspected before use for any damage.

If in doubt—don't.