

ETU OHS REPS NEWSLETTER



FLAME RESISTANT CLOTHING

When an electric current passes through air between ungrounded conductors and grounded conductors, the temperatures can reach 20,000°C / 35,000°F. Exposure to these extreme temperatures both burns the skin directly and causes ignition of clothing which adds to the burn injury. The majority of hospital admissions due to electrical accidents are from the arc-flash burns, not from shock. Arc-flash can kill at a distance of 3 metres.

Electrical workers and their assistants including any safety observer must wear appropriate protective clothing when working on, or in close proximity to, live electrical equipment exceeding 50Va.c or 120Vd.c. The protective clothing worn by personnel must be flame resistant, correct fit, in good condition and cover the full body (including arms and legs).

Flame resistant clothing will minimize burn injury and provide the worker a few seconds of escape time. Whereas everyday non-flame resistant work clothing made from regular cotton or poly/cotton fabrics, regardless of weight can ignite and continue to burn, dramatically increasing the burn injury percentage and severity well beyond that of the initial exposure.

Clothing made from conductive material or containing metal threads must not be worn.

Where a person, equipment or mobile plant may inadvertently contact live electrical equipment, a safety observer must be posted.

The safety observer's duty is to observe personnel working in a potentially hazardous situation and warn them when necessary to prevent inadvertent contact with live electrical

equipment and to also provide assistance in the case of an emergency.

The observer must remain at the work site at all times whilst a potential hazard exists and no other duties should distract from this role.

Safety observers must be specifically instructed in their duties on each occasion.

Any observer so employed must be appropriately skilled in all aspects of safety observation and be fully aware of the potential risks associated with the work.

Where an assessment of the hazards and risks establish that an observer is deemed necessary for any work to be performed safely, or where the task involves work in close proximity to live electrical equipment, then work must not be undertaken without the presence of an observer.

Unless local medical and rescue services are readily available, the observer should be fully conversant and skilled in first aid procedures to at least Level-2 with a CPR refresher within the past 12 months. This training should include appropriate safety rescue techniques for persons in contact with exposed energised conductors.

Reference: *Code of Practice for Safe Electrical Work*
Low Voltage Electrical Installations 1997.

The Electricity Safety Act requires persons to either de-energise or take adequate precautions. Electrical workers must ensure that if they are to work live, the adequacy of the PPE that they wear must be specifically considered .

An electric arc can cause serious damage to a persons skin or clothing. Be safe wear the right equipment.

NEWS

ELECTRICAL SAFETY RECALL

FLUKE 33X CLAMP METERS

Fluke Corporation is voluntarily recalling Fluke 333, 334, 335, 336 and 337 Digital Clamp Meters that were manufactured between 3rd March 2008 and 27th February 2009.

HAZARD - INCORRECT READING

We have detected a defect that has the potential, overtime, to cause the meter to display a low or no voltage reading on a circuit energized with a hazardous voltage. In this situation it is imperative that the practice of testing the meter on a known live circuit before and after checking the circuit under test is maintained. Should the meter not pass the "known live circuit test" its use should be discontinued immediately, identified as faulty and removed from service.

CONSUMER ACTION

Customers should cease using and immediately return suspect products to the place of purchase to be replaced free of charge. For suspect serial numbers please visit www.fluke.com.au. For more information, please contact Fluke Australia on (02) 8850 3333

See www.recalls.gov.au for Australian Product Recall Information

ELECTRICAL INCIDENT

A recently reported incident highlights the need for those members who may be testing and tagging equipment to conduct a thorough inspection as per the requirements of AS/NZS 3012 and AS/NZS 3760.

The incident that WorkSafe Victoria attended involved a suspended scaffold (swing stage) at a large construction site in the CBD, where a cable connection device caught on fire.

It appears that the fire occurred due to the ingress of moisture into the connection device resulting in a short circuit.

The connection device comprised two cast alloy cases enclosing a 12 pin connector and held together by an external clip. Between the male and female connections a rubber seal was missing allowing moisture to enter the coupling. The other issue was the external clip was damaged and did not effectively clamp the two connectors together. The connectors were held together with duct tape and the equipment was out of date.

AS/NZS 3760 requires a visual inspection as well as testing. A visual inspection would have identified the faults and not allowed the swing stage to be put into service.

2009 Calendar

EEIT OHS TRAINING DATES

10AM -12PM

Melbourne –

Held at old ETU Office

Swanston St Carlton South

June 24

August 26

October 28

OHS REP TRAINING

Contact Tanya—0393269377 to book into the courses below.

Initial 5 Day OHS REPS Course

June 15, 16, 22, 23, 24

October 6, 7, 13, 14, 15

1 Day Refresher OHS Rep Course

Melbourne

July 22

October 28

Country

Portland – July 29

Shepparton – September 23

Mildura – November 25