

SAFETY ALERT

SA-232 – Electrical Hazards in Ceiling Spaces

INCIDENT OVERVIEW

Recently a non-electrical worker entered a ceiling space and discovered an unterminated wire. Electric shocks arising from contact with damaged or exposed energised (live) wiring or equipment could lead to serious injury or death.

The Sources of electricity that may be present within a ceiling space include wiring powering:

- Various circuits within the property itself (lighting, power points, hot water systems, ovens etc.)
- Another part of property such as an extension, garage or granny flat.
- Solar/battery storage systems
- Consumer mains that connect overhead service lines (street supply) to the electricity meter box.

Prior to entering any ceiling space:

1. Identify and confirm all sources of electricity to the property. There may be more than one source or multiple properties powered from the same meter box.
2. Identify any hazards that may be introduced as a result of isolating the power.
3. Switch OFF all power at the electricity meter box and place a lock on the MAIN SWITCH or on the meter box itself to prevent inadvertent re-energisation. If it is not reasonably practicable to use a lock, use a recognisable lock-out tag.
4. For non-electrical workers, before entering the ceiling space confirm the power is isolated by turning on lights or appliances within the property. A volt stick can be used as an additional check on wiring and any exposed metallic material. If you are not sure power has been isolated, contact a licensed electrician to confirm power has been disconnected.
5. For electrical workers entering the ceiling space, always Test Before You Touch prior to undertaking any electrical work.
6. Check if the property has a solar/battery storage system. If so, consult with the system owner regarding the proper isolation procedure to follow

WHAT CAN BE DONE DIFFERENTLY TO PREVENT A SIMILAR INCIDENT FROM OCCURRING?



HOUSEKEEPING & ORDER

- ▶ Always ensure proper housekeeping rules are complied with. A clean work space reduces the likelihood of accidents occurring



POSITIONS OF PEOPLE

- ▶ Keep clear of electrical lines if you are unsure that they are live or not.



PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT

- ▶ Always wear the appropriate PPE for the task that is being conducted.



RULES & PROCEDURES

- ▶ Switching OFF power at the meter box does not turn off electricity supply from the street to the meter box. This means the incoming overhead service lines and the consumer mains will still be live. If you find any damaged wiring or appliances within the ceiling space, exit safely and report it to the owner or person in control of the property for proper repairs to be organised.



TOOLS & EQUIPMENT

- ▶ Ensure Always 'Test for Dead', use the required tools to ensure electrical circuits are non-active. Electrical work must only be carried out by a licensed electrician who has the necessary training and experience to undertake the task.

For more information regarding this incident please contact:

HSE Representative:	Brendan Ewington
Contact Number:	0407914100
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Report all incidents and near misses

Please display on Safety Noticeboards and raise this matter at the next Toolbox Talk or Safety Meeting.