

UK HSE: Poorly maintained electrical installation caused fatality

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The UK Health and Safety Executive (HSE) prosecuted a warehouse management solutions company after an employee was fatally electrocuted while servicing electrical equipment.

What happened?

A worker was carrying out pre-planned maintenance on an air compressor when he was electrocuted. He was not found for more than an hour following the incident. His injuries were fatal.

What went wrong?

Investigation found that:

- Control measures in place to prevent contact with electricity during maintenance activities were neither suitable nor sufficient.
- The electrical systems had not been tested or visually inspected since installation, and an incorrect isolating switch had not been identified.

The HSE inspector noted that:

*“Poorly maintained electrical installations and faulty electrical appliances can kill or severely injure people; and cause damage to property. This was a wholly avoidable incident, caused by the **failure of the company to implement safe systems of work and identify the risks**. Had the company identified the correct isolation point for the compressor and **ensured that employees were sufficiently trained and supervised** in the lock off procedures expected of them then this fatal incident would not have occurred.” (IMCA emphasis).*

IMCA notes that appropriate control of electrical equipment is something worth looking closely at, particularly in two areas:

1. Where personnel using the equipment may not be engineers or electrical professionals (for example, the galley, the mess, the gym or other spaces not used for work).
2. Where access to electrical equipment or wiring is very difficult or is in spaces rarely visited by personnel.

IOGP Life Saving Rules:



Energy isolation



Bypassing safety controls

Actions

Members may wish to refer to:

- Short video: [Electrical hazards](#)

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