

Safety Bulletin



Isolation Irregularities – Test Before Earth

Issued to: **Network Rail E&P Maintenance Engineers, Infrastructure Maintenance Engineers, Infrastructure Maintenance Delivery Managers, Route Infrastructure Engineer, Route Infrastructure Director and accredited OLE isolation providers**

Ref: **07-23-001 Issue 01**

Date of issue: 14th July 2023

Location: National

Contact: Martin O'Connor, Network Technical

Head Contact Systems AC/DC, Technical Authority



Always test before applying earths or straps.

Overview/Action Required

Overview

Feedback from front line Overhead Line Equipment (OLE) staff and recent isolation irregularities have indicated that test before earth is not being consistently applied to the 25kV OLE.

As part of a recent planned isolation, the person authorised to carry out the application of earths did not have the correct written instruction to undertake the task nor did they complete a test prior to applying the earth.

Action Required

NR/L3/ELP/29987 Module 7 mandates that the Nominated Person shall issue and brief a Form STED to the person authorised to test and apply earths on their behalf. The Form STED shall state the location, number and type of earths to be applied.

Network Rail isolation process NR/L3/ELP/29987 Modules 7 and 10 mandates that before earths are applied, the OLE shall be tested at each location using a valid Live Line Indicator. This is also one of the Network Rail electrical Lifesaving Rules.

Discussion points

- Are all the Lifesaving Rules embedded as part of your electrical safety culture?
- Which Lifesaving Rules apply to each OLE work activity?
- Have you been briefed on the details contained in the Form STED?
- Do you always make sure you have a Form STED before you operate an OLE disconnector/apply an earth?
- Do you always test at **each location** prior to applying an earth?
- Do you record on the Form STED how many earths you have applied/removed?
- Would you be comfortable to challenge the Nominated Person if you don't receive a Form STED?
- Do you have sufficient time to undertake the task? Plans must allow sufficient time for isolations to be completed safely?
- Do you confirm that the Live Line Indicator (LLI) has a valid weekly test certificate?
- Only carry out activities that you are trained and competent to do.