IMEA
INDIANA MUNICIPAL ELECTRIC ASSOCIATION
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Safety Message of the Day for IMEA Members

Applying Personal Protective Grounds Safety Message

Always test circuits for the absence of voltage before placing personal protective grounds. Just because you know it's de-energized doesn't mean that it really is.

The use of personal protective grounding is covered by OSHA 1910.269(n), "Grounding for the Protection of Employees," and the NFPA 70E Section 120.3, "Temporary Protective Grounding." Both sources contain very similar requirements.

NFPA 70E Section 120.3(A) Placement states, "Temporary protective grounds (personal protective grounds) are to be placed so that they do not expose employees to hazardous differences in potential.

Grounds cannot be placed too close to the worksite and must be placed or secured so they cannot come into contact with people." Grounds must be placed close enough to protect workers, but not so close that they can strike them if the grounds should become re-energized, especially due to fault-level currents. The current flowing through a ground cable can create a magnetic field strong enough to make the cable snap like a whip, possibly breaking bones or knocking workers off structures.