

ELECTRICAL SAFETY AND NETWORK ASSETS



It appears that distribution businesses have a communication issue between themselves and the electrical contracting industry and/or the building industry.

There have been a few recent events that have brought this issue to the forefront.

1. The incoming electrical mains cabling to a construction site was connected to the low voltage side of an offsite transformer. The other end of the cabling was connected to a bus bar system in the main switchboard.

The electrical contractor had no control over the isolation aspects of the cable, therefore, deeming the cable live and treating it accordingly.

Problems occur when the workers on site can not effectively isolate this cable to ensure safe working conditions on the switchboard. Consequently, there is potential for workers to access live parts, or parts that may become live, that are not directly under their control.

2. The incoming high voltage to a substation construction site was energised and workers were unaware this event had occurred. There is some conjecture regarding this from the distribution company.

If there had been incoming low voltage mains, all workers on site would have been advised accordingly. The mains would have been signposted and additional mechanical cabling protection during the construction phase would have been evaluated.

It seems clear that for the safety of all concerned, prior notification of energising any cabling on site must be enforced.

The safety of all workers should be a high priority for the distribution companies to ensure a procedure is developed in conjunction with the Foundations for Safety, Victoria, along the lines of what currently occurs on site for cabling under the control of electrical contractors.