



OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ELECTRICAL INSPECTOR

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GUIDELINES FOR RESTORATION OF ELECTRICITY SUPPLY AFTER A FAULT TO CUSTOMERS' PREMISES

Reference is made to the Circular Letter to all Registered Electrical Contractors dated 5 January 2000 and, in particular, the exemption available for immediate restoration of electricity supply to customers' premises.

The repair work is based on this principle of replacement of 'like for like'. For example, this may include the replacement of faulty redundant manufactured electrical equipment with current equipment. i.e. replacing 55 amp fused mains box with 80-amp type.

1. OVERALL PRINCIPLES

- The exemption is to apply only when a fault has occurred on the owner or occupier's electrical installation, prescribed electrical installation work is required for restoration of electricity supply in the area from the point of supply up to and including the main switch/es.
- Minimum work should be carried out to immediately restore electricity supply in a safe manner.
- Certificates of Electrical Safety for non-prescribed electrical installation work must be completed and must clearly indicate that the work was for restoration of supply after a fault.
- Every effort should be made to comply with the appropriate current standards.
Reference to Appendix H3 Repairs: (AS 3000:1991 – Wiring Rules) which states, "Repairs to existing installations may be effected using methods that were acceptable when that part of the installation was originally installed". (For AS/NZS 3000:2000 refer to clause 1.5.)
- A mandatory electrical inspection is not required unless indicated below.
- At the completion of any electrical installation work, the tests required by the Electricity Safety Act and the Regulations must be carried out.

2. REPLACEMENT OF MAINS BOX AND/OR FUSED OVERHEAD LINE CONNECTOR BOX (THREE PHASE & SINGLE PHASE)

For a faulty mains connection box (non-fused overhead line connection box) - replace box and issue a Certificate of Electrical Safety.

If the only way to restore supply is to install a fused overhead line connector box, carry out the installation and issue a certificate of electrical safety for non-prescribed electrical installation work.

For a faulty fused overhead line connector box - replace fused overhead line connector box and issue a certificate of electrical safety for non-prescribed electrical installation work.

3. ADDITIONAL WORK

Where a fault occurs and, for whatever reason, an upgrade from single phase to two or three phase or from two phase to three phase is required, the additional work is regarded as "alterations" and becomes **planned** prescribed electrical installation work. This work would require a certificate of electrical safety for prescribed work to be issued.

Mandatory electrical inspection is required.

4. CONSUMERS' MAINS

- 4.1 For repair or replacement "like for like" means single-phase to single-phase, two-phase to two-phase or three-phase to three-phase.
- 4.2 The replacement or repair of the faulty section of the consumer's mains must substantially follow the same route as the original mains.

5. UNDERGROUND CABLE SUPPLY

5.1 Underground Reticulation Distribution (URD)

For a faulty cable, action should be taken to repair cable or replace faulty portion of cable only to the extent necessary to immediately restore electricity supply and issue a certificate of electrical safety for non-prescribed electrical installation work.

5.2 Underground Cable Supply from Overhead Line

Same principle as 5.1

6. PRIVATE OVERHEAD ELECTRIC LINES (POELs)

6.1 Fault involving no “substantial reconstruction”

- For example, pole failure, action should be taken to repair or replace pole only to the extent necessary to restore electricity supply and issue a certificate of electrical safety for non-prescribed electrical installation work.
- Similarly, for overhead line conductor.
- Same process for hazardous bushfire risk area and low bushfire risk area.

6.2 Fault involving “substantial reconstruction”

- For low bushfire risk area, same process as 6.1.
- For hazardous bushfire risk area, processes are in place for the temporary repairs to be undertaken with the permission of the OCEI. OCEI also provides an exemption for Regulation 403(1) **on a case by case basis** until the POEL is placed underground as part of planned work. An agreement must be reached with the customer to plan the undergrounding of the POEL by an agreed date.

The repair or replacement must be sufficient to have electricity supply restored with a minimum amount of work and to make safe.

5.3 Fault involving a POEL and decision made to underground the faulted POEL.

In this situation, a decision has been made to convert from overhead to underground. As such, there had been no attempt to immediately restore electricity supply. Consequently, it has become planned electrical installation work and will need to be inspected prior to connection to electricity supply.

6. FAULTS ON THE EARTHING SYSTEM

The only focus must be to restore electricity supply. For example, an over voltage injection may cause an earth to be no longer suitable. Repairs or replacement can be undertaken under the exemption only where the customer is off supply due to the fault.

7. SWITCHBOARDS

7.1 Faulty main switch – Customer off supply

The exemption allows the main switch to be replaced using AS3000 requirements to restore electricity supply promptly and issue a certificate of electrical safety for non-prescribed electrical installation work.

7.2 Fault has caused component part damage to rest of switchboard

The principle to follow is to carry out the minimum work to restore electricity supply safely and promptly and issue a certificate of electrical safety for non-prescribed electrical installation work.

7.3 Fault due to overload or lack of maintenance

Same as principle 7.2

7.4 Relocation of switchboard after a fault

Where fault has occurred and there is a need to relocate switchboard, it becomes planned electrical installation work requiring a certificate of electrical safety for prescribed electrical installation work. *Mandatory electrical inspection is required.*

Ian Graham
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