



BEST PRACTICE

SUBJECT: QUALIFIED OBSERVER

PRACTICE STATEMENT: A Qualified Observer shall be designated to provide timely warning while working on or within the minimum approach, including extended reach, of energized conductors or equipment (systems at and above 600V).

PRACTICE DESCRIPTION: A member of the crew shall be identified to act as a Qualified Observer to ensure clearances are maintained, PPE, and effective cover-up is installed.

- A. A Qualified Observer shall be designated to provide timely warning while working:
 - On or within the minimum approach including extended reach, of energized conductors or equipment (systems at and above 600V);
 - When using mechanical mobile equipment near energized conductors;
 - When moving energized conductors
- B. A Qualified Observer is defined as is an electrically qualified worker that can identify all hazards present to the crew working energized conductors. The Qualified Observer shall be capable of:
 - a. Distinguishing exposed live parts;
 - b. Identify nominal voltages;
 - c. Determine minimum approach distances;
 - d. Knowing safe work practices for working on, or near, energized lines and equipment;
 - e. Recognize electrical hazards to which workers will be exposed and skills and techniques to control those hazards;
 - f. Rendering immediate assistance in case of an accident
- C. The Qualified Observer shall not perform other duties and all work shall stop if the Qualified Observer can no longer perform observer duties.

DEFINITIONS

- The term “effective cover up” is used to describe the installation of phase-to- phase rated insulating protective cover on energized conductors and/or equipment of different potentials when the lineman is within reaching distance or in areas extended by handling conductive objects.

The term “extended reach” is used to describe being within five feet of energized conductors and/or equipment or having a conductive object within five feet of energized conductors and/or equipment.

BENEFITS:

- Eliminate unintentional contact with energized components while working on, or near lines and equipment.
- Eliminate injuries from unrecognized hazards or changes in conditions.
- Clarify duties and provides guidance as to when observers are necessary.
- Provides guidance on observer qualifications.

Frequently Asked Questions
Qualified Observer

1. Who may be a Qualified Observer?
 - Any crew member who meets the criteria of a qualified observer.
2. While personnel are performing tasks that would require a Qualified Observer, can the Qualified Observer have other duties?
 - No. While performing the functions of a qualified observer, the qualified observer shall not perform other tasks.