Best Practice Safety Brief

Qualified Observer

The majority of workplace injuries arise from worker behavior. We make mistakes, errors in judgment or simply do not have our full attention on the job and something happens. There is also a tendency to get so focused on getting the job done that we do not recognize the obvious hazards. These behaviors can be offset or eliminated by using a qualified observer. Having this dedicated and well-informed crew member will help ensure that clearances are maintained, proper equipment is used, and effective cover up is installed.

Prior to work commencing a member of the crew shall be identified to act as the qualified observer. This crew member is an electrically qualified worker that can identify all hazards present to the crew working energized conductors. The observer shall be capable of identifying nominal voltages, energized components, minimum approach distances and proper safe work practices while crew members are working on energized lines. The observer shall also have the authority to stop work if needed and be able to render immediate assistance in the event there is an incident.

The Qualified Observer shall not perform other duties and all work shall stop if the Qualified Observer can no longer perform observer duties while crew members are working on or within the minimum approach, including extended reach, of energized conductors or equipment (systems at and above 600V).

Following this practice will assist in eliminating unintentional contact with energized components while working on, or near lines and equipment. It will also help clarify duties and provide guidance as to when the use of a qualified observer is required.

Read the Best Practice here: Qualified Observer

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[1] 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.
[1] This best practice is not intended to mandate staffing requirements
[1] 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. 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.

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