



Office of **Energy**

Office of *ENERGY* WA

Electrical **FOCUS**

Training Courses for Western Power's New Connection Procedure

Western Power advises that as part of its new optional connection process, more than 1500 electrical workers employed by electrical contractors in the metropolitan area have attended free presentations on the work practices of meter installation and underground pillar connection and received authorisation to carry out this work. These presentations, conducted at Power Training Services, Jandakot and at the Electrical Contractors Association's Training Centre, Malaga, commenced in July.

Some contractors elected to have their employees undergo a more comprehensive hands-on training course on the same practices, for which a charge was made.

The phasing in period for the new connection process in the metro area operated from 1 July to 30 September 1998. During this period, it was expected that contractors wishing to be involved would have had adequate opportunity for their people to attend the presentations or training sessions.

For those who have not previously applied, presentations can still be arranged by telephoning Power Training Services on 9411 7888 or by faxing a request to 9411 7887. A charge will now apply for the presentations. A minimum of five participants will be required for each presentation.

Western Power's Principal Installations Inspector Kevin Saunders said that Western Power was pleased with the response by electrical contractors to commit to this new connection process. "We have had an overwhelming response from the electrical contracting industry" he said.

From Western Power's recent experiences with this new process, there are several issues that electrical contractors need to be aware of:

1. Particular attention should be paid to the tightening of consumers mains terminations into meter fuses. During movement when fitting the meter panel, the wire can twist and work loose. Inspectors have found in a number of cases that the connections can be pulled out.
2. When fitting distributed master metering to an installation, the line and load neutrals of any meter panels on units where meters are not yet fitted should be bridged together with a suitable tunnel connector. This is to ensure adequate earthing of the meter enclosure where a meter has not yet been fitted. In these cases, the line side of the meter fuses will be live.

Electrical Installing Work Defects Are Cause for Concern

During recent years, there has been a positive trend of a reduction in repeated serious defects by the same persons.

However, the overall level of serious defects is still causing concern.

Most of these defects are due to electricians (electrical mechanics and electrical contractors) not checking and testing their work after the work is completed. Electrical contractors must regularly supervise the work to ensure that their workers check and test every task. This requirement to check and test also applies to repairs to existing electrical installations.

Failure to test and check electrical work is a breach of Regulation 49 of the *Electricity (Licensing) Regulations 1991*. It is also an offence pursuant to Regulation 50A of the Regulations to cause or permit an installation which is dangerous or unsafe to be connected to an electricity supply.

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It is also an offence pursuant to Regulation 52 for an electrical contractor to submit a Notice of Completion for the work that is unsafe or dangerous when the contractor does not have a reasonable and honest belief that the work is safe (ie. because of the defects, the Notice of Completion has not been duly completed).

Instances of unsafe work typically include:

- leaving cables unterminated at the load end but still connected to the switchboard at the supply end;
- transposition of the polarity of aerial submains after a repair; and
- failure to install an MEN connection in an out-building.

Readers may recall that similar defects resulted in a girl's death a few years ago.

Electricians who perform electrical installing work or submit Notices of Completion for electrical work which is unsafe will be subject to prosecution and possible disciplinary action by the Electrical Licensing Board.

Western Power's Revenue Protection Group

In Energy Bulletin No. 9 (Electrical Focus December 1997), Western Power announced the formation of its Revenue Protection Group. The function of the new group is to investigate instances of meter interference and loss of revenue.

Tony Mancini of Western Power's Revenue Protection Group advises that, since the group's establishment for a 12 month trial period in October 1997, over 60 cases of meter tampering and bypasses have been detected. "Meter tampering is prevalent in today's society and it is assumed that there are many more cases where the illegal wiring has not been discovered" Tony said. "These represent potentially fatal hazards to unsuspecting electrical contractors and workers working within installations".

The Group also investigates stopped or unregistered meters. So far, these activities have saved Western Power over \$2 million dollars in lost revenue. Western Power has recognised the group's value to the organisation and has decided to make the group permanent.

Proper Testing Prevents Injury

Electrical contractor Ron Haendel of R&L Electrics escaped serious injury when he followed proper testing procedures in testing an isolated circuit prior to working on it.

Prior to working on the faulty RCD circuit, Ron isolated supply and tested to confirm that his isolation was effective. When he noticed that the fridge power point was still energised, Ron removed the switch board escutcheon cover, revealing that one power circuit bypassed the Western Power meter and main switch.

The Western Power Revenue Protection Group was contacted and an investigation commenced to determine who carried out the illegal wiring.

All electricians are urged to be aware of meter bypasses and tampering and to test properly before working on any circuits that have been isolated.

Should electricians discover meter bypasses, tampering or meter irregularities, they should contact Western Power's Revenue Protection Group by telephoning 08 9479 2769 (or the local electricity supply authority if it is not Western Power). All calls are treated confidentially and are responded to promptly.

Representation on Standards Australia Committee EL/1

Chief Electrical Inspector Michael Bunko recently took over from Bob Briggs as the Office of Energy's representative on Standards Australia Committee EL/1.

Bob Briggs has been the Office of Energy's representative on Standards Australia, Committee EL/1 for many years. Bob has worked tirelessly to represent the Office of Energy and assist Committee EL/1 and relevant subcommittees in a very professional way. His contributions to the work of Committee EL/1 and associated committees was acknowledged at a recent meeting of Committee EL/1.

Bob is currently involved in electrical licensing uniformity issues at the national level.