



Worker electrocuted in roof space

Background

In early 2020, an air-conditioning installer suffered a fatal electric shock while working in the roof space of a house.

In Western Australia, it is a legal requirement to de-energise and isolate all power before a worker enters a domestic roof space. The person responsible for this is the employer, main contractor, self-employed person or person with control of the workplace.

Possible contributing factors in incidents of this type

- Power to the house not turned off while a worker is in the roof space.
- Source of electrical hazard, for example:
 - deteriorated wiring
 - unused wiring that is connected to the switchboard
 - previous electrical work left in an unsafe state
 - non-compliant electrical components in use
 - solar power system wiring installed in a non-compliant way – note that if wired incorrectly, solar system wiring may be live even if the main switch is off
 - metallised products, such as insulation foil in contact with an electrical conductor due to poor installation practice.

Managing this hazard

1. Ensure power has been de-energised and isolated (turned off at the main switch) before anyone enters or works in a domestic roof space, whether or not they will be doing electrical work.
2. Always use a licensed electrician to do electrical work.

Note that there are other hazards associated with working in roof spaces such as heat, pests, asbestos or falls. Implement suitable controls based on risk.

Further information

Commission for Occupational Safety and Health WA – [Guidance note – Working in roof spaces](#)

The above information is provided based on the Department's preliminary investigation and further investigation is continuing.