

Office of the Technical Regulator

GPO Box 320
ADELAIDE SA 5001

Telephone: (08) 8226 5518
Facsimile: (08) 8226 5529
E-mail: otrmail@sa.gov.au
Internet: www.sa.gov.au/otr

Notice to Electrical Workers

It has come to the attention of the Office of the Technical Regulator that some Electrical workers are performing switchboard upgrades without involving SA Power Networks, by either working live or removing/replacing the SAPN service fuse themselves.

Working live is not a normal work practice as stated by SafeWork SA.

SafeWork SA

Managing Electrical Risks in the Workplace – Code of Practice Fact Sheet

Energised electrical work

Energised electrical work must only be undertaken where it is **absolutely necessary, and must not be carried out merely because it is convenient.**

Work on energised equipment requires systematic risk assessment, planning and preparation. It should only be undertaken by an electrician with the necessary competency, training, tools, testing equipment and personal protective equipment (PPE) suitable for the work.

Energised work should only be carried out according to a safe work method statement prepared after consultation with relevant workers and Health and Safety Representatives, and with a safety observer present. The person acting as safety observer must be competent to implement identified emergency control measures, rescue and if necessary resuscitate the electrical worker. Safety observers must not have other duties assigned to them while they are observing.

Safety barriers and signs should be considered to protect electrical workers from inadvertent contact with energised parts and warn and direct other persons away from any area where energised work is being undertaken.

Refer to pages 34-44 of the Code for detailed safety recommendations on undertaking energised electrical work or work near energised electrical parts.

The South Australian Electricity Act and SA Power Networks Service & Installation Rules both state the offence of interfering with the SAPN Equipment.

South Australian Electricity Act 1996 (Ver 17.10,2017)

84—Unlawful interference with electricity infrastructure or electrical installation

(1) A person must not, without proper authority—

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- (a) attach an electrical installation or other thing, or make any connection, to a transmission or distribution network; or
- (b) disconnect or interfere with a supply of electricity from a transmission or distribution network; or
- (c) damage or interfere with electrical infrastructure or an electrical installation in any other way.

Maximum penalty: \$20 000 or imprisonment for 2 years.

SA Power Networks - Service and Installation Rules (1st June 2017)

2.13 Offences

The Electricity Act 1996 and Electricity (General) Regulations 2012, codes and guidelines enacted under those and other legislation include regulations for protection of Distributor assets and qualification of persons who may work on those assets. Offences under these regulations include:

1. Any work on SA Power Networks network assets unless authorised by SA Power Networks.
2. The damage or interference of any SA Power Networks assets such as:
 - fuse link removal
 - break a seal or lock
 - dismantle or detach any SA Power Networks cables or equipment
 - interference with electricity meters, time switches, equipment and/or service cables
 - obtaining electricity by fraud
3. Unauthorised entry of SA Power Networks assets e.g. substations and infrastructure.

If a person is found guilty of an offence, it could result in the imposition of substantial fines together with an order for damages to compensate SA Power Networks for any loss and court costs. It may also cause that person to have a criminal record.

Whenever a switchboard is upgraded and no Meter Isolator is installed on the switchboard SAPN must be contacted to remove and re install their service fuse to allow the work to be carried out safely and compliantly.