

Test before touch while fault finding

Issued to: All Network Rail line managers, safety professionals and RISQS registered contractors

Ref: NRB 17/07

Date of issue: 07/04/2017

Location: Barnham, Sussex

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Volt-Stick showing the location cabinet is live during "Test before touch"

Overview

Technicians were sent to site to investigate an Intelligent Infrastructure alarm.

The alarm was raised by a piece of equipment known as a Bender Earth Monitoring system which is typically found in signalling and plant equipment rooms and other trackside locations.

Staff used a volt-stick at the location to carry out the "Test before touch" lifesaving rule.

Following the "Test before touch" rule avoided the risk of electric shock as the signalling location cabinet was found during the test to be live at 200 volts.

Rubber gauntlets were used to access the location. A short circuit fault was observed in the 650 volt chamber located in the bottom of the signalling location cabinet which was then isolated and a repair carried out.

Discussion Points

Please discuss the following with your team.

- When would you test a signalling location cabinet?
- How would you test to check it was safe to touch?
- What would you do if you noticed smoke or sparks emanating from a cable route or enclosure?
- What precautions should be applied when investigating low insulation values of 650V feeder systems?

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