

NR/L3/ELP/27720 – Test Before Touch for Overhead Line Equipment

Issued to: **Network Rail line managers, safety professionals and accredited contractors**

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Location: National

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Never assume equipment is isolated – always test before touch.

Overview/Underlying causes

Following recent electrical safety incidents where colleagues sustained life changing injuries due to inadvertent contact with Live Overhead Line Equipment (OLE), a new standard has been published to formalise and improve the Test Before Touch process for OLE.

Test Before Touch for OLE will be completed by an Authorised Person or Nominated Person.

It demonstrates to the COSS (OLP) and members of the working party that the OLE is de-energised at the location of the test. It is an additional check to make sure that everyone in the working party is in the right place in accordance with the Overhead Line Permit.

Please remember:

- The Overhead Line Permit remains the primary electrical safety reference document.
- Any person within the working party can request for the OLE to be tested before they touch (defined as planning to come within 600mm of) a conductor at any time while the Overhead Line Permit is in place.

The standard is applicable to Network Rail and its contractors.

If you hold any of the following competencies, you're required to undertake a detailed briefing on the content of the new standard:

- Nominated Person
- Authorised Person
- COSS (OLP)
- Persons holding OLE2 & OLE4
- Persons holding OLE3, where the person holds elements 2, 3 and 4 and;
- Persons involved in the planning of the implementation of isolations and associated Overhead Line Permits

An overview briefing has been developed for people who request Overhead Line Permits, which enables their works to be completed safely.

The Test Before Touch for OLE standard and briefing materials are available via your normal means of accessing standards, with a compliance date of **4th January 2023**.

Key message

- Have you had your detailed or overview brief on the Test Before Touch for OLE standard?
- Do you understand when the requirements of the Test Before Touch for OLE standard apply?
- How do you currently assure yourself that the conductor you're about to touch is safe to do so?
- Are you always briefed on the contents of the Overhead Line Permit (Form C) by the COSS (OLP)?
- If you are unsure about any part of the briefing of the Overhead Line Permit, how do you seek further clarification?
- What action would you take if you felt unsafe whilst working on or near OLE?