

Long portable earths for 25kV OLE isolations

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

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Overview

Following an isolation audit, it has become apparent that the industry is continuing to use the non-interlocked variant of long portable earths for earthing overhead line equipment.

At Ranskill in 1998 a member of the isolation team received a fatal electric shock when removing a non-interlocked long portable earth.

Investigation revealed the incident involved the failure to follow procedures detailed in Network Rail standard NR/L3/ELP/29987.

To increase safety, after the incident the interlocked long portable earth was introduced to eliminate the risk associated with the application and removal of non-interlock variants.

Immediate action required

- Long portable earths shall only be used to earth isolated overhead line equipment when justified in accordance with NR/L3/ELP/29987.
- Non-interlocked long portable earths must not be used for earthing overhead line equipment after 01/03/2019. Only Product Approved interlocked long portable earths with warning labels at the G Clamp end shall be used for this purpose.
- A video for guidance on the application of interlocked blue earths is available on the Safety Central website.
- Long portable earths shall be procured in accordance with the conditions on the Network Rail Product Acceptance certificate, PA05/00944.
- All Nominated and Authorised Persons shall be re-briefed on the process of applying and removing long portable earths. Long portable earths must be applied and removed in the following sequence:
 - a. When applying long portable earths, the earth connection shall be made before the line end is connected to the overhead line equipment
 - b. When removing long portable earths, the overhead line connection shall always be removed before the earth end is broken.

All Safety Communications are available at [Safety Central](#)