
Locking HV Switch

A local LDC supplied power to a new customer owned gang operated high voltage switch. The high voltage contractor, bringing power to the facility through a substation had left the customer owned switch unlocked once he had completed his job. Someone closed the switch energizing the facility. This was done without proper authorization from ESA.

A worker, assuming that the building was still in its de-energized state, went to inspect a 600 V panel and was intending to touch exposed part (which was energized). Had he not been warned by another contractor working nearby, critical injury or fatality may have resulted.

The practice of not locking out switches to prevent unauthorized use is very dangerous. Ontario Health and Safety Act and Regulations Section 185(1) of the Construction Regulations requires electrical equipment to be installed and operated so as not to pose a hazard to a worker. Energizing without authorization from ESA is also in contravention of the Ontario Electrical Safety Code.

High voltage contractors bringing power into a facility or a section of a facility must keep the installation locked out until connection has been authorized. Keys to the installation shall only be given to those who have authority.