

Unsafe Condition/ Near Miss – Electrical Safety (1)

THE INCIDENT

- A routine audit revealed that a fixed electrical test report (issued 8 months prior) had identified a number of building electrical faults that had not been addressed nor isolated from the workforce, and required immediate attention.
- The electrical faults identified included those classified as *C1 Danger present. Risk of injury, immediate remedial action required* and *C2 Potentially dangerous. Urgent remedial action recommended.*
- The fixed appliance test report was issued following the carrying out of long overdue electrical upgrade works that were required on the fixed electrical system of the company premises. Works had included the removal of electrics that contained asbestos, as well as the replacement of a number of switch fuse boards and the correcting of fuse ratings for the cross section of cables.

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WHAT WENT WRONG?

- The fixed appliance test report had been issued in July 2013. However, the actions had not been addressed in a timely manner.
- The report had not been effectively communicated to the Office Director, and had been left with the premises Safety Officer, whom it was assumed (but not confirmed) would action the recommendations of the report.
- The Safety Officer was unable to directly action the recommendations of the report due to the significant cost implications associated with the corrective measures required. He had assumed that the Office Director was aware of this.

CAUSE

- The cause had been attributed to the insufficient review of the report upon its receipt and subsequent failure to implement an effective action plan to address the recommendations in the report.
- Root Cause Analysis revealed that the system of recording incoming safety documentation (for premises) and verification of the close out of any action (thus re-enforcing responsibilities) was not robust

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CONSEQUENCES/CORRECTIVE ACTION

- A programme was implemented to ensure that any company premises which commissioned inspection or testing activities (including but NOT limited to fixed appliance testing) would ensure that the subsequent report was issued and marked for the attention of the Office Director, supporting the premises planned preventative maintenance programme.
- Inspection and/or testing reports were to be stamped upon receipt, with the stamp comprising a section for sign off from the Office Director verifying that all report recommendations had been completed.
- The company procedure “*Control of Documents and Records*” was updated to incorporate a strengthening of arrangements regarding the close out and verification of actions arising from testing/inspection reports.
- Internal audits were scheduled to verify the effectiveness of the implementation of this process.

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LESSONS LEARNED

- All appointed Office Directors for all company premises were to satisfy themselves that any premises HSSE report (including, but not limited to Fixed Appliance Testing reports) did not comprise any recommendations for action. All current reports were to be stamped, signed off/ verified accordingly. Where actions remained outstanding, a corrective action plan was to be submitted for review.
- All Safety Officers were to ensure that routine communication was established with the Office Director regarding internal/external inspection/test report findings.
- Additionally, all Safety Officers were to complete the recently introduced premises HSSE performance scorecards as a means of further verifying that any additional HSSE reports (amongst other items) had been appropriately actioned in a timely manner.
- All Safety Officers and Office Directors were also expected to attend refresher training on premises HSSE management roles and responsibilities (as also outlined within the company procedure "*Roles and Responsibilities*").