Safety Notice

Health and Safety Warning Notice 98/23

High voltage 3.3 kV electricity distribution equipment: English Electric OB33L Indoor Air Circuit Breaker - suspension of normal operational practice

SUBJECT CONTACT POINT:
Industrial Processes
Technical Standards Directorate
Sutton Coldfield Mil extn 2069
Group
Direct Dialling 0121 311 2069

NOTICE AUTHORISED BY:
P D MEAKIN
AD Industrial Processes

Date:

DEFENCE ESTATE ORGANISATION
MINISTRY OF DEFENCE

Safety Notice
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INTRODUCTION

1. THE CONTENTS OF THIS NOTICE ARE TO SECURE COMPLIANCE WITH THE
HEALTH & SAFETY AT WORK ETC ACT 1974.

2. This Notice is for the attention of Commanding Officers, Chief Executives, Heads of
Establishment, Property Managers, Defence Lands Agents, Establishment Works
Consultants (EWCs), Works Services Managers (WSMs), Authorising Engineers,
Authorised Persons and Contractors, involved in works for MOD.

3. This Notice is to be read by all persons involved with any works associated with the
equipment that is the subject of this Notice.

4. No work involving expenditure on an MOD account is to be carried out without
authority from the Property Manager or the appropriate MOD officer for that
location or facility.

5. Any work required as a result of this Safety Notice must be carried out in accordance
with MOD Safety Rules and Procedures as applicable.

6. The Co-ordinating Authorised Person, or other responsible person, is to notify the
Property Manager:

   of the location of any equipment which exists on the Establishment and is the
   subject of this Notice as soon as it has been identified;

   and

   when the relevant modifications are completed, that the appropriate remedial
   action has been carried out.

7. Defects are to be immediately reported to the Property Manager and the applicable
Authorising Engineer who must impose appropriate operating restrictions on the
equipment that is the subject of this Notice, until remedial action is completed.

8. For MOD Establishments occupied by United States Visiting Forces (USVF), the
responsibilities of Property Manager, EWC and WSM are jointly held by the USVF
and DEO(USF). At base level this jointly managed organisation is to take
appropriate action to implement the contents of this Notice. Where this Notice
contains procedures which differ significantly from USVF practice, a DEO(USF)
Code of Practice section will be issued.

REQUIREMENT
9. ACTION ADDRESSEES ARE TO ENSURE THAT THIS INFORMATION IS PASSED TO THEIR PROPERTY MANAGERS OR OTHER RESPONSIBLE OFFICERS WITHOUT DELAY.

10. This Notice applies to all English Electric OB33L Indoor Air Circuit Breakers. Live switching of these units is prohibited until pivot pin checks on the rotating 'drum type' status indicator have been undertaken.

11. Upon completion of these checks, and, subject to the approval of the appropriate WSM Authorising Engineer or other responsible officer appointed to carry out Authorising Engineer duties, the equipment may be returned to normal operation.

BACKGROUND

12. An Electricity Association Notice has been received notifying us that during routine switching (to off) of a 3.3 kV OB33L Air Circuit Breaker, the circuit breaker failed to complete its operation and the main contacts were only partially opened. Subsequently, a flashover occurred at the rear of the circuit breaker and the fault was isolated by the 11 kV circuit breaker protection.

13. Investigation revealed the cause of the switchgear failure to be a faulty mechanical breaker status indicator. It was found that a pivot pin on one side of a rotating 'drum type' status indicator had come out, causing the drum to twist in its housing. This prevented the normal movement of the drum operating rod that connects to the breaker mechanism.

14. The action of the breaker trying to open with the drum supported on only one side, displaced the rod and locked the mechanism.

15. Further information may be obtained, if required, from the manufacturers GE Power Controls at Liverpool - Mr Albert Sumner, Tel: 0151 524 1122.

END OF SAFETY NOTICE