Safety Notice

Health and Safety Warning Notice 98/22

High voltage 11 kV electricity distribution equipment: Test Probes - suspension of normal operational practice

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

NOTICE AUTHORISED BY:
P D MEAKIN
AD Industrial Processes

Date:
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. The Property Manager is to advise the Works Services Manager of the need to comply with this Safety Notice. The Works Services Manager is to enlist the assistance of either the Authorising Engineer (Electrical) or the Authorised Person (Electrical) in carrying out these duties.

11. The use of Test Probes associated with High Voltage switchgear is suspended with immediate effect.

12. The normal operational practice of a number of test probes is under investigation. As a consequence, they are to be withdrawn from service until such time as the following points have been addressed:

   a. Manufacturers of HV test probes (in use on MOD systems) are to be contacted to ascertain whether or not there have been any modifications to these test probes. Where there have been modifications then the manufacturers should provide you with all relevant details of changes to be made.

   b. Test probes are to be periodically inspected, maintained, tested and certified to ensure that they are always fully serviceable.

   c. Immediately prior to use test probes are to be examined to confirm their integrity, for example, no loose components.

   d. Defective test probes are to be taken out of use and appropriate remedial or replacement action undertaken.

   e. Where the type, age or inspection information is not available, the test probes must not be used until re-certified by the manufacturer as fit for purpose.

   f. No person shall be permitted to use test probes until they have received adequate training in the safe use and operation of the equipment.

   g. Test probes are to be stored under controlled conditions. They are to be kept where they will not degrade or be damaged by any other equipment or persons.

   h. Test probes are to be included in the Electrical Safety Documents Register with information regarding their type, age and inspection record.

   i. The inspection records are to be examined every 12 months to ensure the maintenance and inspection of test probes is being carried out.

Where test probes do not require changes or modification, the manufacturer should confirm the validity of the existing test probes.
When Authorising Engineers (Electrical) receive confirmation that the test probes in use are fit for purpose, and are satisfied that a safe system of work concerning the use and storage of test probes exists, they may lift the operating restrictions imposed on the use of test probes on a site by site basis.

**BACKGROUND**

13. A number of notices from the Electricity Association have been received over a period of time concerning recent incidents associated with the use of test probes on 11kV electricity distribution equipment (for example, DEO Safety Notices 98/06 and 98/20 refer).

14. Recent operational incidents that occurred whilst using test probes have led to operational restrictions and modifications. As a consequence of the Reyrolle ROKSS (Barrhead) incident and advice from the Health & Safety Executive, it is essential to ensure that manufacturers of HV test probes (in use on MOD systems) are contacted regarding any modifications of their test probes.

15. Due to the frequency of these incidents, it is important to address and reaffirm the use of all test probes associated with HV switchgear.

END OF SAFETY NOTICE