

# ELECTRICAL HAZARD INCIDENTS

## PURPOSE

To establish safe operating procedures for handling fires involving electrical substations, transformer vaults, and other electrical hazards.

## PROCEDURE

### 1. All Electrical Incidents

- A. Request the response of a power company immediately.
- B. Establish a perimeter. Absolutely no non-essential personnel will be inside the perimeter without permission of the Incident Commander.
- C. Always establish a plan of action and weigh the risk/benefit of the operation prior to taking action.
- D. Establish contingency plans.
- E. Attempt to locate and disconnect the power source at the breaker/fuse panels.
- F. Keep on-scene companies informed as to the energized status of an emergency scene. Announce if power has been cut, and when.
- G. If the above steps have not been accomplished and it is deemed necessary to enter the premises, special precautions will be taken to avoid contact with the energized conductors and use of fog streams for firefighting only as necessary.

### 2. Substations

- A. Do not enter the substation until cleared to do so by a power company employee.
- B. Protect exposures outside the yard until you are told by electrical personnel it is safe to enter.
- C. Strongly consider the conductivity of run-off and carefully aim hose streams.
- D. Stay clear of incoming and outgoing overhead lines.
- E. Do not use foam type extinguishing agents – use fog patterns only, and only as directed by power company personnel.

### 3. Transformer Vaults

- A. When a transformer vault fire occurs, damage is usually irreversible and immediate. Efforts will be limited to protecting the area from bystanders and to contain the spread of fire in the areas outside the vault.
- B. No fire personnel are to enter a vault for extinguishment without full approval of the power company and Incident Command. It must be fully determined that the electrical power has been cut to the vault.

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## KEY CONSIDERATIONS

- Unless authorized by the power company or Command, do not enter a substation or transformer vault.
- Power company employees often secure points of entrance and egress and work alone to prevent accidents.
- Power lines can be disconnected at the power source but can still be energized by induction from parallel lines.
- Power circuit breakers and transformers can contain from 60 to 1,000 gallons of transil oil, which has a flash point of approximately 300°F. Some may contain PCBs.
- Some power lines may be remotely re-energized by the power company without notifying incident personnel.
- Consider the conductivity of surrounding objects (e.g., guard rail, chain link fence, wet landscaping, road striping, etc.).
- Do not stage apparatus or personnel in the vicinity of wires or other potentially charged objects.