

Electrical Work: Verify the Boundary

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Why this matters

Electrical work can expose nearby crews as well as the person doing the task. Before approaching, know which equipment is involved, who controls the work and where you must stay.

Objective: Recognize the electrical work boundary and the evidence needed before access.

Key hazards or failure points

Wrong equipment; unexpected supply or backfeed; exposed parts; arc heat and pressure; unclear access limits; moved barricades; assumed deenergization.

Practical controls

- Have responsible qualified electrical personnel establish the task, applicable safe-work procedure and required protection. Deenergize under the applicable rules; PPE alone does not justify energized work.
- Keep other crews outside the established restrictions. Coordinate deliveries and walkways so people do not pass through electrical work areas.
- Electrical testing, opening enclosures and work on exposed energized parts belong to appropriately qualified and authorized personnel. Do not reset or investigate damaged equipment on your own.

Verify It in the Field

From a safe position, match the equipment identification and planned task with the responsible electrical person. Resolve labels or locations that do not match before access.

Ask that person to confirm the prescribed electrical-status verification is complete and explain restrictions that remain. An OFF switch, silent motor or visible lock alone does not establish a safe electrical condition.

Check barriers, warning visibility and the usable route from outside the restricted area. Confirm who controls entry and how changes are communicated. Record procedure, responsible person and actual release or hold status.

Stop and reassess

Keep clear and hold affected work for unknown status, a changed task, damaged equipment, defeated barriers or unclear release. Notify the electrical lead. Do not cross a boundary, open a cover or touch equipment to determine whether it is safe.

Ask the crew

1. Which equipment and task does this boundary cover?
2. Who confirms electrical status and required protection?
3. What changes require us to stop and ask again?

Crew awareness; not electrical qualification, PPE selection or energized-work approval.

Sources: OSHA 1926.416/.417; separately scoped 1910.333/.335.

Free next step: [JHA/JSA planning & field-verification worksheet](#)

Expanded guidance and separate forms: toddjeromejenkins.com/toolbox-talks/arc-flash-electrical-work-boundaries