

Safety Alert

Orion

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Safety Observer Role and Understanding Situational Awareness

The absence of situational awareness has been a key factor in recent near miss incidents, where for one reason or another the Safety Observer has been distracted or undertaking another task when in this role. Situational awareness means being alert to potential hazards in your work environment, and act accordingly before they become an increased uncontrolled risk. In this case contact with the distribution network can result in the uncontrolled release of energy.

Why is Situational Awareness important?

Situational awareness involves the proactive observation of your work activity to detect potential hazards before they materialise, therefore providing ample time for response.

Role of the Safety Observer - As per the SM-EI Rule/s

The Safety Observer's role should be clearly articulated and understood. It should include:

- Maintaining constant awareness about current and potential hazards and risks arising from the work.
- Ensuring all workers follow safety protocols during their tasks (e.g., electrical, vegetation, civil contractors etc.).
- Alerting all workers to hazards, and risks including accidental encroachment within the minimum approach distance to live electrical equipment.

What we'd like you to do:

- Share this Safety Alert with your people
- Communicate to your teams the importance of respecting the role of the Safety Observer
- Ensure the Safety Observer SHALL NOT perform any other task while the work activity is in progress
- Ensure adequate training is given to people who perform this critical role
- Monitor the effectiveness of the Safety Observer role in the field and coach/mentor where continual improvements can be made.

What we're doing:

- Circulating information within the industry for increased awareness and learning
- Actively interacting with industry and our service providers to underscore the significance of the Safety Observer role
- Emphasising the substantial relationship between situational awareness and the Safety Observer role.

