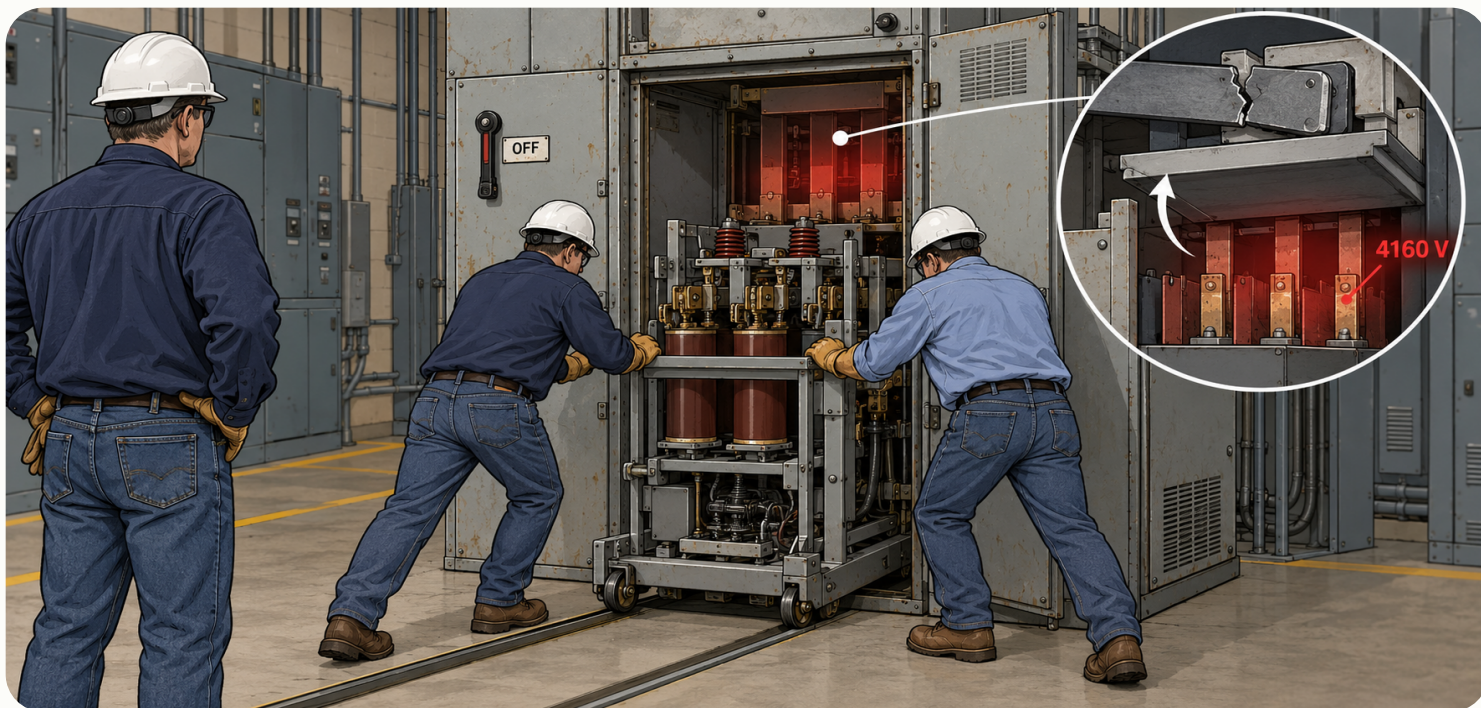


Worker Electrocuted During Contactor Repair

Incident Date: December 12, 2007 / Location: Calgary, AB / Industry: Manufacturing



AI Teaching Illustration. Recreates the exposure before injury. The shutter inset and equipment arrangement are schematic, not an exact equipment drawing.

What Happened

Two electricians were repairing a wood-grinder motor controller. They turned the local isolation handle off, removed the wheeled contactor and replaced a defective coil. A production supervisor joined them to help lift and push the contactor back into its compartment.

The supply bus behind it still carried 4,160 volts. A partially detached control-arm weld allowed the protective shutter to open and the contactor to become energized. A loud noise and flash followed. The supervisor contacted the energized contactor and was electrocuted. Another electrician fell but got up. The supervisor was pronounced dead at the scene.

Why This Became Fatal

The local OFF position did not isolate the incoming supply. OHS found no upstream lockout or task hazard assessment. A failed weld defeated the shutter mechanism. The employer was unaware of a published warning about weld failure; the supervisor had no formal electrical training.

NEVER FORGET.

LET THEIR STORY PREVENT RECURRENCE.

What Safe Looks Like

Identify every energy source. An OFF handle is not proof of isolation.



1 Isolate the Supply

Identify all sources and apply the required upstream lockout.

2 Verify Before Access

Qualified workers must verify absence of voltage before work.

3 Control the Repair

Assess the task, restrict access and address defects and manufacturer warnings.

AI Teaching Illustration. Planning hold point before electrical access; not a switching procedure. **LSR links:** Energy Isolation; Line of Fire.

Investigation Outcome

OHS ordered **IKO Industries** to investigate, assess hazards and develop safe-work and lockout procedures. The employer removed the controller from service, prepared procedures for its replacement and complied with the orders. **A prosecution outcome was not confirmed** in the report or public conviction sources checked.

Talk It Through with Your Crew

- 1 Where can equipment remain energized even when its local handle is OFF?
- 2 Who verifies our isolation points and absence of voltage before anyone touches equipment?
- 3 How do we identify equipment defects and act on manufacturer warnings?
- 4 Would you stop or refuse a repair if isolation or your role was unclear?

SAFETY COMES FIRST.

Your Right to Refuse – Alberta. You may refuse work you reasonably believe presents an undue hazard: a serious and immediate threat. Promptly report the refusal and reasons to your employer or supervisor. They must investigate. Contact Alberta OHS if unresolved. Take reasonable care not to endanger others. You are protected from reprisal.

Sources: [Alberta OHS investigation F-49205](#), pp. 3-7; report completion date not stated. [Alberta refusal guidance](#).
Prepared October 19, 2026. LSR links are learning associations, not findings of a breach.

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