

Worker Contacted Energized Transformer

Incident Date: September 29, 2021 / Location: Calgary, AB / Industry: Electrical Services



AI Teaching Illustration. The red highlight identifies the exposed electrical hazard. Cabinet layout and worker pose are schematic; no arc or burn mechanism is implied.

What Happened

An Encore Electrical Services journeyman and apprentice were assessing low-voltage equipment at Southcentre Mall ahead of a planned shutdown. High-voltage work was to be arranged with a specialist contractor. After the low-voltage work, the journeyman opened the rear panel of a separate 13,800-volt transformer.

The journeyman contacted an energized busbar and was fatally electrocuted. ENMAX crews cut power to the mall so a rescue could be attempted. Power remained off until the electrical equipment in the room was isolated. Emergency medical personnel pronounced the worker deceased at the scene.

Why This Became Fatal

The task moved beyond the planned low-voltage scope into energized high-voltage equipment.

Opening the transformer exposed a busbar capable of fatal contact. A planned future shutdown did not make the equipment safe at that moment. Isolation had to occur before rescuers could approach.

NEVER FORGET.

LET THEIR STORY PREVENT RECURRENCE.

What Safe Looks Like

Stop when the scope changes; establish electrical safety before exposure.



1 Confirm the Scope

Use personnel qualified and authorized for the actual voltage and task.

2 Isolate and Verify

Isolate and lock out. Qualified workers must verify no voltage.

3 Control Access

Keep covers and barriers in place until safe access is established.

AI Teaching Illustration. A lock or OFF label alone does not prove absence of voltage. Isolation and verification must address all sources.
LSR link: Energy Isolation.

Investigation Outcome

Following an August 11, 2022 enforcement review, OHS determined that **prosecution or an administrative penalty was not appropriate** in the circumstances. The investigation was completed October 7, 2022. The public report describes no employer corrective-action program or separate supervisor penalty.

Talk It Through with Your Crew

- 1 Where could our inspections or troubleshooting expand beyond the agreed scope?
- 2 Who is qualified and authorized for the equipment and voltage involved?
- 3 How do we verify isolation before exposure, rather than assume equipment is dead?
- 4 Would you stop or refuse a task when its scope or electrical state is 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-OHS-259130](#), pp. 2-7; summary completed October 7, 2022. [CCOHS lockout](#). [Alberta refusal guidance](#).
Prepared October 19, 2026. LSR links are learning associations, not findings of a breach.

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