

Test Before Touch

The meter was in his pocket. He never used it.

10 MIN

NFPA 70E Art. 120 — Electrically Safe Work Condition

NIOSH FACE 87-63

WHAT HAPPENED

1987 · Maryland · Electrical contractor · 30-year-old electrician

A crew was relocating conduit and wiring for a refrigeration unit fed by TWO separate 480-volt supplies — one for the compressor motor, one for controls. The two disconnects sat in adjacent panel boxes, labeled in pencil, and the compressor-motor marking was barely legible. The crew opened the controls circuit. The compressor circuit was overlooked and stayed hot. The electrician disconnected and taped a conductor, pulled it through conduit with a steel fish tape, then removed the tape from the still-energized wire while holding the fish tape against grounded conduit. He completed the path to ground and was killed.

WHY IT HAPPENED

He had a volt meter with him and never used it. Absence of voltage was assumed from a pencil label instead of verified with an instrument.

WHAT THE STANDARD REQUIRES

- De-energize, isolate, lock, tag, release stored energy — then TEST for absence of voltage.
- Prove the test instrument on a known source before AND after the test.
- Identify every source feeding the equipment. Two feeds is normal, not exotic.
- Disconnecting means must be legibly and durably marked — not in pencil.

TALK ABOUT IT — DO NOT SKIP THIS PART

1. Name a piece of equipment here that has more than one source feeding it. How do you know?
2. Where on this site is a disconnect label wrong, faded, or missing?
3. When did you last prove your meter before and after a test? Walk us through it.

WHAT WE WILL DO DIFFERENTLY HERE

ATTENDANCE

PRINT NAME	SIGNATURE	PRINT NAME	SIGNATURE