

National Electrical Safety Code Committee, Accredited Standards Committee C2

National Electrical Safety Code[®]

Interpretation

Section 44. Additional Rules for Supply Employees

Rule 442G Repeating Oral Messages (28 February 2001) IR 522

Central Maine Power Company (“CMP”) requests an interpretation of the National Electric Safety Code, Part 4, Rules for the Operation of Electric Lines, specifically Rule 442G.

Rule 442G, Repeating Oral Messages, is worded:

Each employee receiving an oral message concerning the switching of lines and equipment shall immediately repeat it back to the sender and obtain the identity of the sender. Each employee sending such an oral message shall require it to be repeated back by the receiver and secure the latter's identity.

1. Is the requirement for repeating oral messages restricted only to communications between the person in charge of the work, dispatchers, and station or substation operators, or does that requirement apply to communications between members of transmission and distribution line crews as well (e.g., communications between two lineworkers working on 7 200 V primary distribution line)?

Other Related Sections

Rule 442 encompasses Switching Control Procedures and specifically work “in the vicinity of station equipment, transmission, and interconnection feeders” as mentioned in 442B.

Rule 442C exempts sections of distribution circuits if equipment affects system operation from within substations as long as the designated person is notified as soon as possible after action is taken.

Rule 444A2, De-energizing Equipment on Lines to Protect Employees, states, “If the employee under whose direction a section of a circuit is disconnected is in sole charge of the section and of the means of disconnection, those portions of the following measures that pertain to dealing with designated person may be omitted.”

2. Based on the related section stated above, is it correct that when working on distribution lines, the repeating of oral switching details is not applicable, and paragraphs B, C, D, E, F, G, and H can be omitted?

Interpretation

“Rule 442G, Repeating Oral Messages, is written to cover transmission of oral messages between geographic sites, as between a dispatcher and one or more line crews. Note that this rule requires the receiver of the message to obtain the identity of the sender and the sender to secure the identity of the receiver.

The example in your Question 1) involves communication between two lineworkers working on a 7.2 kV primary distribution line. The Interpretations Subcommittee assumes you are referring to two lineworkers in the same crew involved in a switching operation at one location. While the basic requirements of Rule 442G apply in this situation, there are some practical considerations involving spoken messages (one person speaking directly to another person in the same line crew, not using radio or telephone). For example:

1. As identity of both the sender and receiver (the crew members) are obvious, they do not need to identify themselves to each other when giving or repeating spoken switching messages.
2. Assuming that a) one lineworker (crew chief) has been given and has repeated an oral switching message in accordance with Rule 442G, b) both lineworkers have discussed the message (as in a tailgate meeting at the job site), and c) both lineworkers understand their part of the assignment, the crew chief can instruct the other lineworker to do the switching at the appropriate time. It is not necessary to repeat the switching message at this point. For example, the message may be to open line switches, circuit 700X, pole ABC, at location DEF. The crew chief is responsible for determining that the crew is at the proper location, has identified the proper switches, understands the operation to be performed, and has opened the switches. The other lineworker is responsible for knowing what is to be done (open switches) when instructed to do so.

The answer to your Question 2) is no. Rule 444A2 applies only to an employee who has sole charge of a) a section of a circuit being disconnected and b) the means of disconnection. In such a case, the employee becomes the surrogate of the designated person, or the “designated person for subject line section”. Only those portions of Rules 444B–H inclusive, that involve dealing with the system designated person may be omitted. All other portions of these rules apply, such as those dealing with operating switches, tagging, protective grounds, proceeding with work, reporting clear, and re-energizing.”