

Alone, At Night, With No Meter

The panel was open. That is not the same as dead.

10 MIN

NFPA 70E Art. 120 · Art. 110 — Program & Emergency Response

California FACE 92CA016

WHAT HAPPENED

1992 · California · Ship repair yard · 35-year-old journeyman electrician

Working the night shift alone, an electrician whose experience was mostly low-voltage was directed by a new supervisor to troubleshoot a ground fault and service the yard's high-voltage power mounds. Earlier that evening he had accidentally dropped power to a dry dock and may have been reprimanded; co-workers believed that made him rush. At about 10:10 p.m., after a plant-wide outage, he was found unconscious on wet ground in front of the south power mound, wearing no PPE, his gloves on the far side of the mound. Investigators found the feeding panel open — but noted backfeed or stored energy could still have remained, no ground was installed, and no test equipment was anywhere nearby.

WHY IT HAPPENED
An open panel was treated as an electrically safe work condition. No lockout, no verification test, no protective grounding, and no one working with him.

WHAT THE STANDARD REQUIRES

- Open does not mean dead. Lock it, test it, and ground it where required.
- Stored energy and backfeed survive an open disconnect. Discharge and verify.
- Nobody performs high-voltage work alone.
- Emergency response has to be trained and available — minutes decide the outcome.

TALK ABOUT IT — DO NOT SKIP THIS PART

1. Who is working alone on this site tonight? Near what?
2. When you are behind schedule or embarrassed, what changes about how you work? Be honest.
3. If someone went down at the far end of this site right now, how long until we found them?

WHAT WE WILL DO DIFFERENTLY HERE

ATTENDANCE

PRINT NAME	SIGNATURE	PRINT NAME	SIGNATURE