



August 28 — No PPE...No Work

We were tasked with testing live power on a breaker that was not tripped but appeared to not be energized as the cabinet in the field had no power. The entire MCC is Class 3 arc-flash and requires a 40-cal suit. We could not find this.	We took the time to hunt around the MCC in various cabinets until we found the 160-cal suit inside the general work-bench/storage cabinet. While this is a safe enough area to store the large PPE bag (which will not fit nicely in the normal PPE cabinet) it does create an issue for those unfamiliar with the plant (our normal area is Wet Mill) and need the PPE. Also, I believe that PPE is required to be stored in dedicated PPE cabinets so it is both readily available and not damaged or soiled by other tools and equipment. As it does fit in the normal cabinet it should be kept there until a larger cabinet can be acquired for it.
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The absence of power...

...doesn't mean the absence of danger.

A crew was assigned to troubleshoot an electrical issue after discovering a field cabinet had no power. Although the cabinet appeared to be de-energized, the breaker feeding the circuit had not been tripped. Because the work involved an energized Motor Control Center (MCC), the task required a Category 3 Arc Flash suit to safely perform voltage testing.

When the crew realized the required 40-calorie arc flash suit could not be found, they made the right decision—they stopped the job.

Electrical work requires more than technical knowledge. It requires discipline. Equipment that appears to be de-energized can still present significant electrical hazards until it has been properly tested and verified. Just as important, the required PPE must be available before any energized work begins. If one critical piece is missing, the job is not ready to proceed.

Stopping work isn't a delay—it's a demonstration of professionalism and sound judgment. Every employee has the authority and responsibility to pause work until the proper controls are in place.

Hazards

- Arc flash exposure
- Electrical shock
- Assumed de-energized equipment
- Missing required PPE
- Inadequate job preparation
- Serious burn injuries

Words of Wisdom

The safest electrical work begins with verification—not assumptions.

Pause and Think

- Do you verify electrical equipment is de-energized before beginning work?
- Is all required arc flash PPE available before energized testing begins?
- If critical PPE is missing, are you willing to stop the job?
- Have you identified all electrical hazards before opening the equipment?
- What other critical safety equipment should be verified before starting work?

Closing Thought

Every electrical task starts with one simple question: **"Do we have everything we need to perform this safely?"** If the answer is no, the right decision is to stop, get the proper equipment, and then proceed. No schedule or task is worth bypassing the protections designed to keep us safe.