

Plumber received electric shock

Risk of electrocution
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Safety alert

What happened

On Friday 28 February 2020, a second year apprentice plumber was involved in repairs to the roof of an awning at a commercial premise in suburban Melbourne. During the work he inadvertently made contact with an electrical cable and received an electric shock. Further investigation found that the cable insulation was in a deteriorated condition. The cable had bare exposed sections that were alive at 230 volts.

The injured worker was taken to hospital and kept overnight to monitor his condition.

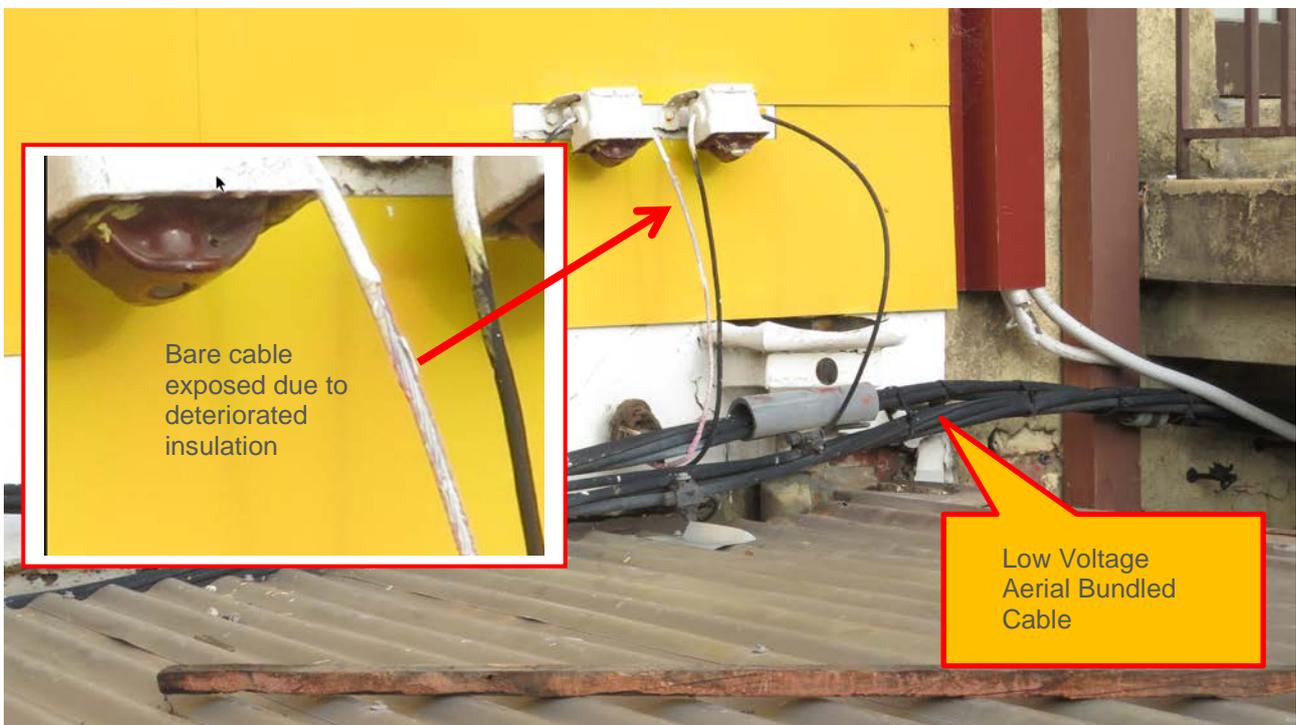


Photo 1: The incident site

Electrical Hazard

In many suburbs the power companies mount their low voltage aerial bundled cables to the facia of the building above awnings and these are connected to the customer's cables. Due to age and weathering, some cables may have deteriorated insulation that could result in exposed cables.

Exposed live cables create the potential for a person to receive an electric shock, sustain burns, or result in a fatality.

What to do

When planning work:

- Identify the scope of works and assess the work area for electrical cables. If you are unsure if the cables are electrical, engage a registered electrical contractor (REC) to help with identification.
- Visually check work area for any cables to ensure they appear to be in good condition and that there are no exposed connections or cables.
- Before commencing any work near electrical cables you must manage the hazard of electricity.

When accessing roofs and awnings:

- If **bare or exposed cables** are identified, report this to the relevant power company or a REC and maintain an exclusion zone.
- Maintain exclusion zone distance. Workers must not come closer to live electrical cables than the following minimum distances. This also includes any tools, equipment or material they may be holding.
 - Insulated low voltage cables 100mm
 - Bare or exposed low voltage cables 1500mm
- Where work is required near electricity cabling and there is a need to enter into, or potential to enter into the exclusion zone, you must get written permission from the power company.
- No temporary covering is to be applied by persons other than power company personnel.
- For additional information about working near power cables and to identify your power company please follow the link below <https://esv.vic.gov.au/technical-information/electrical-installations-and-infrastructure/no-go-zones/>

Who we are

Energy Safe Victoria (ESV) is Victoria's safety regulator for electricity, gas and pipelines. Our role is to ensure that Victorian gas and electricity industries are safe and meet community expectations. We are also responsible for licensing and registering electricians and educating the community about energy safety.

More information is available on the ESV website: www.esv.vic.gov.au