



BEST PRACTICE

SUBJECT: QUALIFIED OBSERVER

PRACTICE STATEMENT: Identify and utilize qualified observer for critical tasks.

PRACTICE DESCRIPTION: A member of the crew shall be identified to act as an observer to ensure clearances are maintained, PPE, and effective cover-up is installed. The observer shall be capable of the identifying nominal voltages, energized components, minimum approach distances, and proper safe work practices while crewmembers are working on energized lines.

NOTE: This section is not intended to mandate staffing requirements.

A. The term “effective cover up” is used to describe the installation of phase-to-phase rated insulating protective cover on energized conductors and/or equipment of different potentials when the lineman is within reaching distance or in areas extended by handling conductive objects.

B. The term “extended reach” is used to describe being within five feet of energized conductors and/or equipment or having a conductive object within five feet of energized conductors and/or equipment.

BENEFITS:

- Eliminate injuries from unrecognized hazards or changes in conditions.
- Clarify duties and provides guidance as to when observers are beneficial.
- Provides guidance on observer qualifications.

Frequently Asked Questions

Qualified Observer

1. What qualifications does the Qualified Observer need?
 - The observer shall be capable of identifying nominal voltages, energized components, minimum approach distances, and proper safe work practices while crewmembers are working on energized lines, give warning, and are able to initiate the emergency action plan.
2. Is a Qualified Observer needed for every task?
 - No, only during critical tasks as defined in the job briefing process.
3. Who may be a Qualified Observer?
 - Anyone crew member who meets the criteria of a qualified observer.
4. While personnel are performing critical tasks that would require a Qualified Observer, can the Qualified Observer have other duties?
 - No. While performing the functions of a qualified observer, the qualified observer shall not perform other tasks.