

Ask The Expert: Must We Protect Exposed Live Electrical Panels from Contact?



QUESTION

Breaker panels have been installed on the end of 3 drying rooms of a cannabis facility under construction and they're live. They currently don't have doors on them (doors are being painted I'm told). Should there be some other covering on them? Should there be barricades or other things protecting panels from accidental contact with equipment? We're in Ontario.

ANSWER

Yes and Yes.

EXPLANATION

Let me be clear that I'm a lawyer with zero knowledge of electricity and only a rudimentary grasp of electrical safety regs. But while I can't offer anything on the technical side, what I DO know is that you have a duty to guard against foreseeable risks. The origin of that duty in Ontario is OHS Act Sec. 25(2)(h) which requires employers to 'take every precaution reasonable in the circumstances for the protection of a worker.' (Every other province has a similar provision in its OHS Act).

My assumption is that the reason you're asking these Qs is that you do, in fact, recognize a hazard. If so, you need to deal with it.