Electrical Safety in Cold & Wet Conditions – Ask The Expert

Supervisors must verify controls and stop unsafe work, while workers must inspect equipment, use PPE, and report hazards.

Ultimately, your duty is to take every reasonable precaution to protect workers from environmental electrical hazards.

QUESTION

Our electricians often work outdoors in winter and during wet conditions. What are our key safety obligations to prevent electrical shock risks on site?

ANSWER

Cold, wet, and icy conditions significantly increase the risk of electrical shock, so your primary obligation is to eliminate or control exposure wherever practicable. This starts with avoiding energized work and delaying tasks until conditions improve when possible.

EXPLANATION

Where work must proceed, you must ensure proper controls are in place. Ground Fault Circuit Interrupters (GFCIs) are

mandatory for outdoor and wet condition use and must be tested before each shift. Electrical equipment and extension cords must be CSA-approved, rated for cold/wet environments, and inspected for damage such as cracking, stiffness, or moisture ingress. Damaged equipment must be removed from service immediately.

You should also minimize risk by using battery-powered tools where possible, elevating connections off wet ground, and keeping cords protected from snow, ice, and standing water. De-energization and lockout procedures are critical before maintenance or adjustments.