

ASG Electric Shares Blog Post, “NFPA 70E 2018: First Impressions”



Chuck Fox, Principal of [ASG Electric](#) in Madison, Wis., shared a [blog post](#) on his company’s website, providing insights on the newly released NFPA 70E 2018 Edition.

In the post, Fox wrote:

NFPA has just released the 2018 edition of the NFPA 70E “Standard for Electrical Safety in the Workplace.” At ASG Electric, we strive to be a key resource in assisting our clients to develop a strong “70E/OSHA Compliant” electrical safety program.

Looking back, NFPA 70E: 2009 was the first edition that called for the electrical safety program to assess and “label” each component with the available incident energy result or a category of PPE to be worn for energized work. The central focus was to define the hazard/injury potential at each “serviceable point” within the electrical system.

NFPA 70E: 2012 had many points of emphasis on improved documentation. These included:

- Condition of maintenance – tests and inspections shall be documented (205.4)
- There shall be a documented meeting between a host employer and contractor to review the policies and practices of the electrical safety program (110.1)
- The content of the training program shall be included in training documentation (110.2)

NFPA 70E: 2015 focused extensively on “condition of maintenance.” The very scope of NFPA 70E was revised (see Scope 90.2) to include an emphasis of “safety related maintenance” as a core element of the electrical safety plan. This was a welcomed enhancement to the NFPA 70E standard to fully recognize that the source/triggers of an arc flash incident is within the electrical components, and not the label posted on the cover. Gathering only device nameplate data (to create labels) was no longer sufficient and an electrical testing and inspection program should also be part of your “NFPA 70E compliant” electrical safety program.

For NFPA 70E: 2018, one of key points of emphasis is found in 105.3. “The employer shall have the responsibility to establish, document and implement the safety related work practices and procedures required by this standard.”

This new article brings with it the challenge of understanding the arc flash risk potential in the electrical system and assessing the existing work practices current in place, regarding energized electrical work. The 2018 Standard also specifically defines that hazard elimination shall be the first priority in the implementation of safety-related work practices.

In summary, NFPA 70E: 2018 creates a call to action to not only document the “as found” electrical system, conduct employee training and provide PPE, but to evolve to “what should we be doing to better protect our employees?”

Many updates in NFPA 70E: 2018 have a significant focus on the employee/worker. NFPA 70E: 2018 calls for a risk assessment procedure, and the long-standing hierarchy of risk control methods has been elevated as an article within the 70E standard. A job safety planning process has been defined more deeply and a job briefing is also required for energized work. In continuing the focus on the worker, NFPA 70E: 2018 calls for a safety program that includes elements that will trigger “incident investigations” when close calls or near misses take place.

While the three key components of making known the hazards, provide training, and providing PPE are still solidly in place, NFPA 70E: 2018 brings a focus on the “people aspects” as organizations establish, document, and implement their electrical safety program.

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