

NFPA 70E® Through the Years: from 2015 to 2024



Examining Changes to Article 120.5 (Now 120.6): Process for Establishing and Verifying an Electrically Safe Work Condition



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2015 Article 120.1 Step (5)

What It Says
Use an adequately rated test instrument to test each phase conductor...both phase-to-phase and phase-to-ground. Before and after each test, determine that the test instrument is operating satisfactorily through verification on a known voltage source.

What It Means
Only an adequately rated test instrument shall be used for absence of voltage testing. Verifying the operation of all devices used is a critical step to ensure each device is operating properly.



2018 Article 120.5 Step (7)

What It Says
Exception No. 1: An adequately rated permanent mounted test device shall be permitted to be used to verify the absence of voltage of the conductors or circuit parts at the work location, provided it meets all of the following requirements...

What It Means
The use of an alternate method for verifying the absence of voltage was added, recognizing that permanently mounted test devices can be used, as long as the device meets the 4 requirements referenced in the standard.



2021 Article 120.5 Step (7) & Exception No 1

What It Says
Step (7): Use an adequately rated portable test instrument to test each phase conductor or circuit part to test for the absence of voltage.
Exception No. 1 to 7: An adequately rated permanent mounted absence of voltage tester shall be permitted.

What It Means
Step (7) updated text from “verify it is deenergized” to “test for the absence of voltage”. This verbiage is more direct in the objective of Step (7).
The modification to Exception No. 1 was made to clarify that a permanently mounted absence of voltage tester is permitted for use, not just any permanently mounted test device.



2024 Article 120.6 Step (7)

What It Says
Use an adequately rated portable test instrument to test each phase conductor or circuit part at each point of work to test for the absence of voltage.

What It Means
The addition of “at each point of work” emphasizes the importance of testing at the point closest to the disconnect, not at a remote point, or a point separated by other devices or connection points. You should be testing for the absence of voltage at the point of work.



Device Type	2015	2018	2021	2024
Portable Meter	✓	✓	✓	✓
VeriSafe™ Absence of Voltage Tester	✗	✓	✓	✓
Test Portals	✗	✗	✗	✗
Voltage Indicators	✗	✗	✗	✗

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