



**Pacific Gas and  
Electric Company™**

# REVIEW COMMITTEE



PACIFIC GAS AND ELECTRIC COMPANY  
2850 SHADELANDS DRIVE, SUITE 100  
WALNUT CREEK, CALIFORNIA 94598  
(510) 974-4282

MARGARET A. SHORT, CHAIRMAN

- DECISION
- LETTER DECISION
- PRE-REVIEW REFERRAL

RECEIVED  
OCT. 21, 1999

**CASE CLOSED**  
**FILED & LOGGED**

INTERNATIONAL BROTHERHOOD OF  
ELECTRICAL WORKERS, AFL-CIO  
LOCAL UNION 1245, I.B.E.W.  
P.O. BOX 4790  
WALNUT CREEK, CALIFORNIA 94596  
(510) 933-6060  
PERRY ZIMMERMAN, SECRETARY

General Construction Grievance No. SJO-99-018  
Fact Finding No. 6970-99-128  
Pre-Review Committee No. 2224

KATHY LEDBETTER  
Company Member  
Local Investigating Committee

KATHY MAAS  
Union Member  
Local Investigating Committee

### Subject of the Grievance

Grievant was issued a DML for failure to follow appropriate work procedures resulting in an unplanned outage.

### Facts of the Case

The grievant is a Title 300 Subforeman A, Line Department. He was in charge of a job that required the placing of grounds on a 12KV line. The grievant performed a buzz test on the line to determine if it was energized. He heard a buzz but decided it was coming from a nearby 115 line as it did not have the flash or spit usually associated with a 12KV line.

The Protective Grounding Manual C.2. states: "If buzz test indicates presence of voltage, a second test will be performed using an approved voltage detector."

The grievant acknowledged he violated this procedure. He did so based on his belief that the buzz was coming from the nearby line and because he did not have a voltage detector available at the job site.

The grievant directed the Apprentice to apply the grounds. He did so successfully on the first phase. When he applied the grounds to the second phase the line flashed and the outage occurred affecting approximately 600 customers and the San Jose Airport for about 45 minutes.

Discussion

The PRC at the outset recognized the importance of following all safe work practices and noted the grievant's admission of knowledge of the rule violated.

Most of the discussion focused on the Positive Discipline System and the fact that the grievant had no active discipline at the time the DML was issued. Skipping steps in the procedure, in the Union's opinion, flies in the face of the intent of the program which is to change behavior. Union believes that management is not recognizing that a Written Reminder is a serious step in the disciplinary process and that putting employees immediately on a DML puts the employee at risk of discharge for minor, unrelated to the DML infractions.

Company responded that there are some situations that are so serious that more severe discipline is warranted as in this case because the grievant is in a lead position and his short-cutting put the apprentice at risk. Further, the Company noted that recently there have been several high profile incidents that have inconvenienced customers, resulted in injuries, and made headlines due to employee failure to comply with safe work procedures.

DECISION

After much discussion, the PRC agreed the DML was for just and sufficient cause. This case is considered closed.



Margaret A. Short, Chairman  
Review Committee

10/21/99

Date



Perry Zimmerman, Secretary  
Review Committee

10-21-99

Date