

NATF Redacted Operating Experience Report

Regulator Not Placed in Neutral Position Prior to Bypassing

About NATF Redacted Operating Experience (OE) Reports

North American Transmission Forum (NATF) operating experience reports highlight positive or negative transmission (reliability or resiliency) experiences worth sharing for learning opportunities or potential trending. The overall goal is to help each other learn without experiencing the same issues first-hand. This sharing originates confidentially within the NATF membership.

Redacted operating experience reports are posted on the NATF public website to allow the NATF and its members to more broadly share information, especially safety-related alerts and learnings, with contractors and other utilities to benefit the industry at large.

The NATF member company that submitted the initial restricted distribution OE report for this topic/event has approved the NATF to issue this redacted OE report.

Open Distribution

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Topic

Regulator Not Placed in Neutral Position Prior to Bypassing

Description

While bypassing a regulator, a switchman forgot a step specified in a procedure (i.e., to place the regulator in the neutral or “0” position).

Distribution switching conducted by the crew does not regularly bypass the regulator, and the scope of work changed the morning of this event. The scope of work was appropriately changed when it was suggested to bypass the regulator because it is a much safer practice before changing out the controllers. Once the switch was operated, an internal fault in the regulator occurred and the equipment was damaged. This incident caused a 20-minute outage to a customer. This event, however, also serves as a safety near miss. Any improper bypassing operation could have resulted in an explosion and/or fire, which could have resulted in a serious injury or death.



Lessons Learned

1. An event like this could happen to anyone, regardless of experience.
2. Before any operation of equipment, make sure you are qualified to perform the work before proceeding. Any questions should be discussed with your supervisor.
3. Take a pause and question your surroundings. Stop and think about the task being performed. If something does not feel right at this point, walk around the job site and inspect.
4. Ask a peer to confirm the task(s) being performed. Talk with your supervisor again if needed and confirm details before performing the task. After you verify everything is aligned correctly, perform the action and review your work.

Actions Taken

1. Where appropriate, the company installed better signage for warning switchmen of ensuring the regulator is in the neutral or “0” position before operating the switch.

2. Training was conducted with maintenance personnel on metering and bypassing regulators.
3. The procedure used for distribution switching will be revised to include more detailed language for bypassing regulators.

Extent of Condition

The transmission services group does not own or have a large number of regulators in service; however, many regulators owned by customers are operated from time to time. The crew that bypassed this particular regulator does not perform this work often, but some crews perform this work on a routine basis.