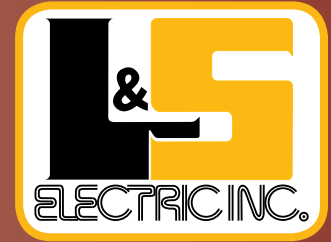


Current Arc Flash Regulations

Do You Meet Current Arc Flash Regulations?



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What Is Arc Flash?

According to the National Fire Protection Agency (NFPA), “arc flash is a dangerous condition associated with the release of energy caused by an electric arc.” It is a fault in which current flows from an energized component, through air, to another energized component, the ground, or both. The energy released during an arc flash creates high temperature gasses that can cause life threatening burns and melt metal; pressure waves that can hurl even heavy objects through the air, including people, at speeds well above 500 miles per hour; a bright flash that can cause irreversible eyesight damage; and a loud blast that can cause irreversible hearing problems.

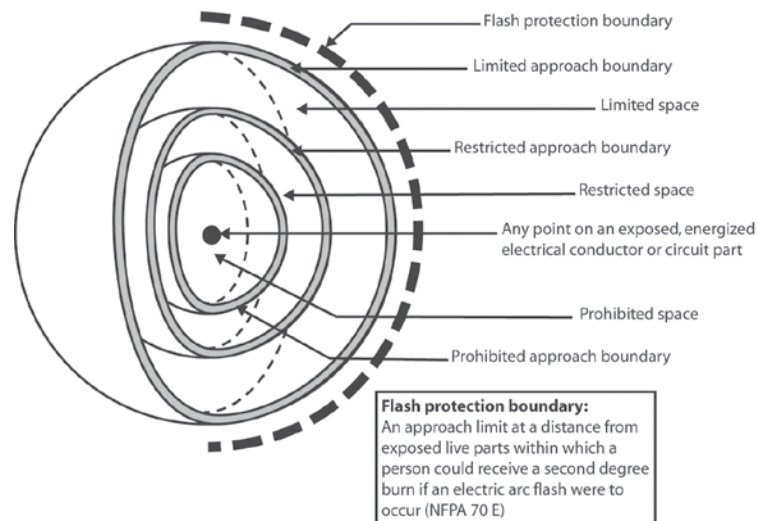
Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) field inspectors refer to NFPA 70E and the National Electric Code (NEC) 2002 to determine compliance with safety procedures related to arc flash. To comply, companies must provide the following:

- A well documented, comprehensive safety program
- Arc flash calculations showing the amount of energy available
- Personal protective equipment (PPE) for all maintenance personnel or people who might be subject to an arc flash
- Training for workers
- Proper tools for safe work
- Flash hazard labels on equipment

In the next NFPA 70E and NEC revisions, it is expected that labels will be required to include the equipment’s flash protection boundary, incident energy level, and required PPE. Incident energy is the amount of energy an arc flash can produce, while flash protection boundary is an imaginary sphere that surrounds a potential arc point within which a person could receive a second-degree burn if an arc flash occurred.

What Can Be Done to Meet the Requirements?

In order to comply with OSHA regulations, companies have to perform an arc flash analysis before work is performed on energized equipment. Arc flash analysis determines the incident energy, necessary PPE, and the arc flash boundary. L&S Electric can perform this analysis, provide recommendations, help with understanding the regulations, and provide labels for tested equipment with all required information, including safe approach distances.



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