

What Happened

Two HVAC technicians replaced a condenser fan on a split AC unit outside an accommodation without obtaining electrical isolation from an authorized isolator. Lock-Out Tag-Out (LOTO) procedures were not followed—they simply switched off the local isolator and began work.

The unsafe activity was identified during a routine walkdown by the BP Area Authority and Shaqab HSE. Work was immediately stopped, a Time Out for Safety (TOFS) was initiated, and the technicians were formally warned. The task was later resumed in full compliance, with proper authorization, LOTO application, and prove-dead verification.



Breaker ON

Why It Happened

Supervisory Assumptions Can Undermine Safety Compliance

In the absence of the regular supervisor, the acting supervisor assigned the task but did not follow up to confirm the full scope or ensure safety protocols—like coordination with the PA and isolator—were followed. The supervisor assumed the technicians had coordinated based on past practice and trusted their experience

Multiple Roles for Key Personnel:

The Performing Authority (PA), manages several responsibilities concurrently. This limits their availability for field-level supervision and real-time task monitoring, which is essential for ensuring compliance with isolation procedures.

Complacency and Behavioral Drift:

Technicians, though experienced and trained, viewed the job as a quick and low-risk task. This overconfidence led to a deliberate bypass of critical safety procedures.

Limited Isolation Resources:

Only three authorized isolators were available for the entire KCC camp, creating operational constraints and contributing to shortcuts.

Planning and Communication Gaps:

Tasks were reassigned via informal channels without adequate follow-up or coordination, resulting in uncontrolled work execution

What We Can Learn

Experience does not replace procedure: Even experienced workers may bypass controls if not held accountable or reminded consistently. Ensure to conduct biweekly awareness sessions to refresh control of work procedures and LSR, provide all maintenance staff with personal copies of LSR and site safety standards, and regularly verify their understanding and application.

Risk perception must be challenged: Familiarity can breed complacency—reinforce that no task is "routine" when it involves hazardous energy.

Strengthen Speak-Up Culture: Promote speak-up channels and Stop Work Authority, empowering staff to raise concerns or stop unsafe work without fear

Clear task delegation is essential: Line Managers must ensure thorough handovers to acting supervisors, including practical demonstrations for high-risk tasks before independent work.

Role conflict weakens safety: Combining critical roles (PA, isolator, and manager) can lead to oversight lapses.

Proactive Seasonal & Resource Planning: Ensure adequate staffing and efficient planning during peak summer months to manage increased AC issues safely. The maintenance manager and department heads will lead planning sessions with supervisors, PAs, isolators, and key personnel to prioritize tasks based on risk and enforce strict CoW compliance. No task should proceed unless it can be done safely and in full accordance with CoW. If immediate execution isn't feasible, alternatives—like temporary use of emergency rooms—should be used to maintain guest comfort without compromising safety.