



Safety Alert

Electrical Incident - teacher injured while performing electrical work on a computer power supply.

A teacher removed a power supply unit from a computer for the purpose of fixing it. While testing the live power supply unit the teacher's hand inadvertently touched a live wire, resulting in an electric shock that threw the teacher backwards. The teacher sustained injuries to the hand and presented with an uneven heart rate after the incident.

Dangers of Working Live

Dangers of working on live electrical components are well documented. Over the past decade, there have been nine electrical deaths at workplaces where persons have been working on or near live electrical circuits.

Electrical Safety Legislation

The *Electrical Safety Act 2002* states that a person must not perform electrical work unless they hold an appropriate electrical work licence.

School staff should **not** perform electrical work.

Where a school requires electrical work to be carried out on a computer or any other electrical equipment, a qualified electrician authorised by the school should be contracted to carry out the work.

School Maintenance Activities

School staff with experience are able to remove / install computer components that are extra low voltage (< 50v AC or < 120v DC) eg 'plug-in' components such as: disk drives, sound cards and memory chips. However, it should be noted that some computers have 240volt components exposed when the lid/cover is removed.

Safety Precautions

To prevent exposure to electrical shock school staff should, **turn off** the mains power supply to the computer before carrying out any work.

If school staff are uncertain of the electrical risks of a task eg voltage of components, then a qualified electrician should be consulted before carrying out work to a computer.

More Information

Electrical Safety Office – ph 1300 650 662 <http://www.dir.qld.gov.au/electricalsafety/index.htm>

Electrical Safety fact sheets - <http://www.dir.qld.gov.au/publications/type/factsheets/index.htm>

Electrical Safety legislation (Qld) - <http://www.dir.qld.gov.au/electricalsafety/law/legislation/>