

INFORMATION MEMORANDUM: 82-X-61

TO: All OSH Directors, Supervisors and Field Personnel

FROM: William M. Lybrand, Director of OSH

SUBJECT: Voltage of Lighting Switches, Especially those for Fluorescent Lighting

DATE: July 19, 1982

PURPOSE

This memorandum is to acquaint OSH personnel to the fact that all lighting switches, especially those used to control fluorescent lighting are not necessarily operating at 115 volts.

BACKGROUND

It has been brought to the attention of the Division of OSH that compliance officers, industrial hygienists and other OSH personnel are of the opinion that all lighting switches operate from 115 volts. This has been substantiated by reviewing citations involving lighting switches.

GUIDELINES

All lighting switches are not necessarily operated at 115 volts. Most of the large office buildings (usually multi-floor), large industrial plants and large schools are served by 480/277 volt, 3-phase 4-wire systems. Where such systems are installed and fluorescent lighting fixtures are used, the fluorescent lighting fixtures are usually connected between any one phase and the neutral, and are operated by lighting switches carrying 277 volts (see attached sketch).

All OSH personnel are cautioned to obtain the correct voltage for lighting switches when writing citations in which such switches are involved. This can be accomplished by discussing with the plant engineer, electrician or other mechanical type maintenance personnel.

EFFECTIVE DATE

This memorandum is effective upon receipt and will remain in effect until cancelled or superceded.