

BICC PME PHENOLIC CUT-OUT FLASHOVER

Background & Summary of Issue:

Three instances of flashovers at a DNO owned cut-out have occurred when Meter Operators were in the process of exchanging the meter on site between November 2021 and February 2022.

The cut-out make and model in all three incidents was a **BICC black phenolic PME type unit with part number 50390 embossed on the main body between the fixing screws**, as pictured below.

Thorough forensic investigations as to the cause of the failure are underway by DNOs, and still ongoing at this time.

Learning Points and Actions:

Whilst any occurrence of a flashover is taken seriously, the three incidents are the only ones knowingly reported since the start of the smart meter rollout in 2012, with over 10M electricity smart meters being installed across the UK.

To reduce the risk of any further such incidents, an enhanced risk assessment and testing procedures are required to be followed before and during any work (**only on this cut-out make and model**):

- Before work, check for surface voltage on the cut-out.
- With the fuse carrier and cover plate removed, check for surface voltage on the area between the incoming phase and neutral including the lower fixing screw.
- If any signs of distress or discolouration to the body around the incoming cable terminations area, or any surface voltage detected on the unit at any stage of work, **stop work** and report an A19 defect code to the DNO, as per the MOCOPA Service Termination Issues Guidance.
- If no issues are identified, continue to work as per your company's working procedures and report a C17 adding "BICC PME 50390 cut-out" in additional information field.

Any additional tests undertaken on the cut-out body will require full live working PPE to be used as your employer's procedures state.



50390 marked between fixing screws



Area for additional tests and checks

The item is identifiable by the part number **50390** being on the main body between the two fixing screws, and the four screw vertical external PME connection block on the right hand side.

Next steps

Normal working processes can remain in place for all cut-out equipment not covered by this bulletin. The additional tests and checks required for the identified cut-out make and model will remain in place until the results of the forensic testing has been reviewed and published.