

## Electrical-Safety Sense: Be On The Safe Side With PESDs

Written by Phil Allen, President, Grace Engineered Products  
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Companies across the U.S. and Canada are investing time and resources in establishing effective NFPA 70E/CSA Z462 programs to stem the risk of arc flash and other electrical hazards. Design changes are implemented with the purpose of keeping workers on the safe side of electrical panels and far away from the dangerous voltage needed to create an arc flash.

As part of those design changes, permanent electrical safety devices (PESDs)—*external devices permanently mounted to electrical systems that, directly or indirectly, reduce the risk of arc flash and/or shock hazard*

—have become the de-facto standard to which panel designers are turning: PESDs allow them to create safer conditions for workers who are performing mechanical and electrical lock-out/tag-out and at the same time help increase the productivity of those workers.

### What others are saying

“Some companies view electrical safety as an expense,” says Dennis Doody, Project Manager with Vilter Manufacturing in Cudahy, WI, “but our motor starters actually reduce that expense. We use permanent electrical safety devices, separate enclosures and an HMI to provide the operator with tools to perform tasks outside of the enclosure rather than have to interact with energized components. By doing this, we keep employees away from energized electrical equipment and perform tasks safely on the outside of the enclosures.”

The time and money saved as a result of Vilter including PESDs in its designs will continue to generate returns on initial investments: Safety will be increased. Bottom lines will be helped.

### Clarifying the business case

By keeping workers on the safe side of panels, organizations reduce their risk for arc flash—a *phenomenon that could cost tens of millions of dollars and more*

. Those that do experience arc flash incidents will likely find themselves spending significant time and money contending with numerous interested parties and/or associated issues. That list could include, but wouldn't necessarily be limited to: OSHA, unions, lawsuits, personal issues, employee re-training, increased insurance premiums, even having to reference the accident on bids for future work. The consequences that can result due to such situations detract from a company's growth, deplete its essential resources and redirect its focus away from progress. Considered in these terms, being on the safe side/keeping workers on the safe side of your next lock-out/tag-out clearly makes good business sense.

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