

STATE OF NEW YORK

Public Service Commission

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12052/12-E-0198

STRAY VOLTAGE SURVEYS MEET EXPECTATIONS

— Utilities Will Continue to Test and Inspect Outdoor Facilities to Ensure Public Safety —

Albany, NY—6/28/12—The New York State Public Service Commission (Commission) today received a report from Department of Public Service staff that indicated that, for 2011, utilities met the requirements of the Safety Standards Order and continue in their efforts to provide safe electric service and ensure that the public is not put at risk from instances of stray voltage.

“New York has the most comprehensive stray voltage-testing program in the nation,” said Commission Chairman Garry Brown. “The Commission established its electric safety standards to safeguard the public from exposure to stray voltage and to identify and eliminate potentially harmful conditions before serious safety hazards and/or reliability deficiencies develop. To accomplish this goal, electric utilities are required to annually test all of their publicly accessible electric facilities for stray voltage and to inspect all of their electric facilities at least once every five years. Statewide, the companies are meeting our overall expectations.”

The inspection process involves visual inspection of electric facilities to identify any damage that may cause hazardous conditions or reliability concerns. Inspections are done by a combination of trained company employees and contractors. If an inspection reveals a deficiency, the safety standards require utilities to make all repairs necessary to eliminate the deficiency based upon its severity.

The utilities are also required to test annually streetlights along public thoroughfares for stray voltage, regardless of ownership. Stray voltage testing is generally a manual process performed

using handheld devices. The Commission also requires that 12 mobile surveys be performed in New York City; two mobile surveys be completed in Buffalo; and one each in Yonkers, White Plains, Albany, Niagara Falls, Rochester, and New Rochelle. In areas served predominantly by underground facilities, utilities can use mobile testing instead of manual testing. Consolidated Edison Company of New York, Inc. (Con Edison), National Grid, and Rochester Gas and Electric Corporation (RG&E) all utilized mobile testing as a means of compliance.

Manual stray voltage testing was performed on approximately 4 million utility facilities statewide in 2011, with 1,837 stray voltage findings identified. Of the total stray voltage findings, 480 (26 percent) were at voltage levels of 4.5V or higher. Findings on streetlights accounted for 316 (67 percent) of the conditions at voltage levels of 4.5V or higher.

In 2011, stray voltage findings were found on 0.05 percent of total utility facilities tested. Individual detection rates for streetlights, underground distribution, overhead distribution, and transmission are 0.1 percent, 0.0008 percent, 0.022 percent, and 0.007 percent, respectively. The rate of findings increased slightly from 2010 to 2011.

Shock reports attributed to utility facilities have remained relatively flat over the last several years, ranging from a low of 74 in 2009 to a high of 93 in 2008 with National Grid and Con Edison reporting the highest number of shock incidents. Analysis indicates that many of these calls can be traced to individuals contacting normally energized equipment while performing maintenance work on homes or businesses.

The staff report today, when issued, may be obtained by going to the Commission Documents section of the Commission's Web site at www.dps.ny.gov and entering Case Number 12-E-0198 in the input box labeled "Search for Case/Matter Number". Many libraries offer free Internet access. Commission orders may also be obtained from the Commission's Files Office, 14th floor, Three Empire State Plaza, Albany, NY 12223 (518-474-2500).