

SENATE BILL 724

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By: **Senator Conway**

Introduced and read first time: January 31, 2014

Assigned to: Finance

A BILL ENTITLED

AN ACT concerning

Electric Companies – Contact Voltage – Surveys – Revision to The Deanna Camille Green Act of 2012

FOR the purpose of altering how often an electric company must conduct a certain contact voltage survey; altering the type of objects and surfaces on which each electric company is required to conduct a certain contact voltage survey in a contact voltage risk zone to include objects and surfaces that are proximate to underground electric distribution plant; altering the time frame within which an electric company must conduct a certain contact voltage survey of certain areas of the electric company's service territory that are not located within a contact voltage risk zone; altering the range of voltage that certain equipment must be certified as reliably able to detect; requiring the Public Service Commission to post a certain report on the Commission's Web site; requiring the Commission to adopt certain regulations; and generally relating to contact voltage plans and surveys.

BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,
Article – Public Utilities
Section 7–214
Annotated Code of Maryland
(2010 Replacement Volume and 2013 Supplement)

SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND, That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

Article – Public Utilities

7–214.

(a) (1) In this section the following words have the meanings indicated.

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



(2) “Contact voltage” means a voltage condition that may result in an object or surface being inadvertently energized.

(3) “Contact voltage risk zone” or “CVRZ” means the portions of each electric company’s service territory that:

- (i) are served by underground electric distribution plant; and
- (ii) have substantial pedestrian traffic or population density, whether permanent, seasonal, or varying by time of day.

(4) “Contact voltage survey” means a survey performed by an electric company to detect contact voltage consistent with the electric company’s voltage survey plan.

(5) (i) “Electric distribution plant” means all electric company plant used to distribute electricity to its customers.

(ii) “Electric distribution plant” includes covers and protective structures.

(iii) “Electric distribution plant” does not include customer meters and meter enclosures.

(6) “Voltage survey plan” means a plan, submitted by an electric company and approved by the Commission, that governs the electric company’s contact voltage detection and testing equipment and voltage detection and testing procedures to be used when conducting contact voltage surveys.

(b) (1) On or before September 1, 2012, each electric company shall file with the Commission for approval:

(i) a list and location map for all CVRZs within its service territory, if applicable; or

(ii) if no CVRZs are designated in its service territory, a voltage survey plan.

(2) Within 30 days after the Commission approves a CVRZ within an electric company’s service territory, the electric company shall file its voltage survey plan for Commission approval.

(3) On Commission approval of its voltage survey plan, each electric company shall conduct:

(i) an initial contact voltage survey of each CVRZ within 1 year after the Commission approves an electric company’s voltage survey plan; and

(ii) subsequent surveys of each CVRZ [as set forth in its voltage survey plan] **ON A QUARTERLY BASIS.**

(4) Each electric company shall conduct an initial and each subsequent contact voltage survey within each CVRZ of all objects and surfaces that are:

- (i) publicly accessible;
- (ii) capable of conducting electricity; and
- (iii)
 1. **PROXIMATE TO UNDERGROUND** electric distribution plant;
 2. streetlights owned or maintained by the electric company;
 3. streetlights and traffic signals owned by a municipal corporation or other unit of government, with the consent of the appropriate authority; and
 4. public parks and playgrounds, with the consent of the appropriate authority.

(5) (i) For areas in each electric company's service territory not located in a CVRZ, except for wooden poles, the electric company shall conduct a contact voltage survey on all publicly accessible electric distribution plant and publicly accessible streetlights that the electric company owns or maintains that are capable of conducting electricity:

1. within [3 years] **1 YEAR** after the initial approval of the voltage survey plan; and
2. subsequently as set forth in its voltage survey plan.

(ii) An electric company shall test each streetlight for contact voltage after dark or when the light is illuminated.

(6) At least 60 days before implementing a material change to a voltage survey plan, an electric company shall file an amended voltage survey plan for Commission approval.

(7) The Commission may modify the frequency or scope of any contact voltage survey requirement on a showing of good cause.

(c) (1) Each electric company shall include in its voltage survey plan all equipment used for detecting contact voltage.

(2) (i) The type of each equipment must be certified by an independent test laboratory as being able to reliably detect voltages of [6] 1 to 600 volts.

(ii) Each electric company shall include the certification when filing the voltage survey plan.

(d) (1) Each electric company shall confirm and document all contact voltage detected in its contact voltage survey using a voltmeter and a 500 ohm shunt resistor.

(2) Until a potential contact voltage condition can be confirmed under paragraph (1) of this subsection, each electric company shall make an area safe after detecting a potential contact voltage condition during its contact voltage survey.

(3) If an electric company detects a contact voltage measurement under paragraph (1) of this subsection that is at least 1 volt of alternating current, the electric company shall:

(i) perform a contact voltage survey on all objects and surfaces that are capable of conducting electricity and are publicly accessible within at least 30 feet of the location of the measured contact voltage;

(ii) when electric distribution plant or a street light that the electric company owns or maintains is indicating contact voltage:

1. immediately and continuously make the area safe;
and

2. use best efforts to make a permanent repair to mitigate the contact voltage as soon as possible, but not later than 45 days, unless extraordinary circumstances exist and the area continues to be made safe through a temporary measure to mitigate the contact voltage;

(iii) when property that is not owned by the electric company is indicating contact voltage, immediately use best efforts to:

1. make the area safe; and
2. notify the customer or responsible person associated with the premises or customer-owned facility of the unsafe condition and the need for the customer to make a permanent repair to mitigate contact voltage; and

(iv) maintain written records of its actions to make the area safe and mitigate the contact voltage.

(e) (1) On or before April 1 of each year, each electric company shall file a compliance report with the Commission:

(i) describing the results of its contact voltage surveys; and

(ii) summarizing each known contact voltage electric shock and each contact voltage electric shock complaint received from a member of the public, whether the shock affected an individual or an animal.

(2) The Commission shall approve the form of the report.

(3) THE COMMISSION SHALL POST THE REPORT ON THE COMMISSION'S WEB SITE.

(f) The Commission may impose a civil penalty under this division for a violation of this subsection.

(g) (1) THE COMMISSION SHALL ADOPT REGULATIONS TO IMPLEMENT THIS SECTION.

(2) The Commission may, in its discretion, through order or regulation:

[(1)] (I) waive or modify any provision of this section; or

[(2)] (II) impose additional requirements as circumstances require.

SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect October 1, 2014.