

consultation corner

by L. C. SMITH, NSC Industrial Department

Safe Cleaning of Electrical Switch Panels

Question: I have a question concerning electrical safety. Would a cleaning rag made of a synthetic fabric such as rayon, dacron, or an acetate conduct electricity if used to dust and clean an electrical switch panel? Is there any chance of an electrical shock, and if so what fabrics have the highest and lowest conductivity?

The above questions have no reference to static electricity.

Answer: In reply to your problem concerning the conductivity of rags made from synthetic fibers, I doubt if this is your real problem. Fabrics are considered poor conductors. However, reaching into an energized panel is not a safe procedure because there is always a chance of receiving an electrical shock. Apparently, from your operation you have a problem keeping your electrical panels free of cement and dust, and are cleaning them with rags without de-energizing the panel. It would be advisable to de-energize the pan-

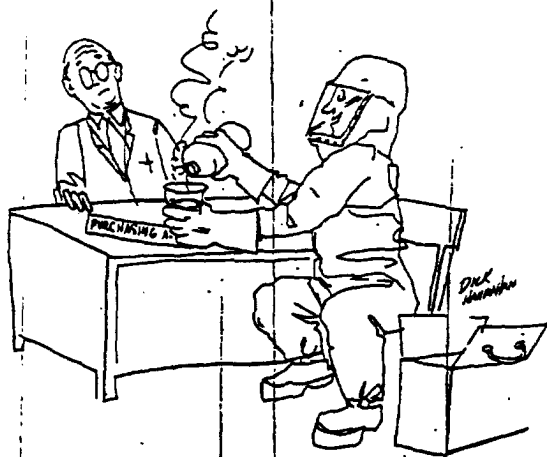
els for cleaning and then you can use a rag, brush, or vacuum-type cleaner.

You might contact your local electrical utility company for their recommendations as to cleaning these panels. It may also be possible to use a clear loose plastic covering of some kind over these panels to keep the dust from collecting.

Who Has the Responsibility For Safety?

Question: Here at our organization the question has arisen as to the correct person in management who should have the safety responsibility.

Looking through my *Accident Prevention Manual*, 5th edition, in Section 2, page 8, I note that the Council conducted a survey in 1961 to determine the organizational position of safety. Of the respondents, 44.8 per cent reported directly to a member of top management, president, vice-president, etc.; 19.8 per cent reported to the plant manager or superintendent; 30.4 per cent reported to the industrial rela-



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National Safety News, February 1969



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