

# Testing Times

A newsletter for the electrical construction and maintenance industry

Volume 11 No. 2

## NETA: not your only choice for electrical testing

**H**ood-Patterson & Dewar (H-P&D) is an electrical testing firm that was incorporated in 1982. We are a wholly owned subsidiary of Patterson & Dewar Engineers, an electrical engineering firm who serves the electric cooperative and municipal utility market in the Southeast. H-P&D is made up of registered professional engineers (PEs), graduate engineers and career test technicians. Our first few years were spent meeting the electrical testing needs of our parent company's clients, but we quickly grew our client base to include large commercial and industrial clients. Over time, our new clients and new projects sent us all over the country and overseas. In recent years, our original client base of cooperatives and municipals has become a very small percentage of our total work (less than 5%).

H-P&D is a contributing member of such organizations as the Institute of Electrical and Electronic Engineers, Inc. (IEEE) and the American National Standards Institute (ANSI). Many of our personnel serve on technical committees for these organizations.

NETA stands for the InterNational Electrical Testing Association. Founded in 1972, NETA is an organization of electrical testing firms united in the common goal of establishing standards in the electrical testing industry and promoting NETA



*There are electrical testing firms that are not NETA members who may be better qualified than a NETA Full Member firm*

member firms. Prior to NETA, there was no standardization or organization of independent electrical testing firms. Using available material from multiple sources (manufacturers, IEEE, NFPA, etc.) along with the experience of this new alliance of independent testing firms, NETA developed their own Acceptance Testing and Maintenance Testing Specifications. These specs are now revised on a four year cycle .

NETA's specs have become widely accepted in the commercial and industrial sectors. NETA has grown to become an accredited standards developer for the American National Standards Institute (ANSI). Also, NETA's certification process allows only employees of NETA full member firms to become NETA certified technicians. Other electrical

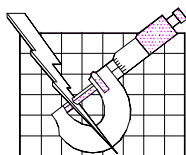
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## New Revision: NFPA 70E 2004

The National Fire Protection Agency has released NFPA 70E Standard for Electrical Safety in the Workplace 2004 Edition. This standard is designed to bridge the gap between the Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA) and the National Electrical Code (NEC). While the NEC is intended for use primarily by those who design, install and inspect electrical installations, NFPA 70E is a working document used for evaluating electrical safety in the workplace.

The provisions in 70E are designed to give protection to employees from electrical hazards. Recently added sections include an emphasis on Flash Protection Boundaries and personal protective equipment (PPE) along with a strong recommendation about working on live parts as the last alternative work practice. A sample "Energized Electrical Work Permit" is included and recommended although not a requirement.

Dupont has a free NFPA 70E Compliance Guide to assist you in determining the Hazard/Risk category for the job tasks you will be performing and in selecting the required PPE. This guide is available from their website at [www.personalprotection.dupont.com](http://www.personalprotection.dupont.com) or by calling 1-800-453-8527. \*



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testing professionals are excluded from this certification process. H-P&D is an Associate NETA member, subscribes to their quarterly magazine, occasionally attends annual conferences and maintains current copies of their testing specs.

We recently applied for NETA membership knowing that we met or exceeded all of their technical and personnel requirements. However, NETA rejected our application based on a technicality, our affiliation with our parent company, not because of our personnel, services, expertise, testing procedures, test reports or any other technical reason. Over the last few years, many NETA "independent" Full Member firms have been bought out by large conglomerates or have formed other types of affiliations. Today, NETA firms include companies that are owned by conglomerates and manufacturers, sell switchgear and are factory authorized service providers. While we respect the advances and contributions that

NETA has made to the electrical testing industry, we are confused by their apparent double standard in their requirements for membership. Any wholly owned subsidiary is by its very nature influenced by and controlled by its parent company no matter who you are or how you are structured and cannot be considered independent.

NETA's goals are the same as ours: to promote experienced, professional, independent electrical testing. H-P&D has always prided itself on providing the highest quality electrical testing in the industry and we have a long list of satisfied clients to prove it. Our registered professional engineers, graduate engineers, and career test technicians give us some of the most experienced personnel in our business. Please remember when specifying or hiring an electrical testing firm that there are electrical testing firms, like Hood-Patterson & Dewar, who may be better qualified than a NETA firm. \*

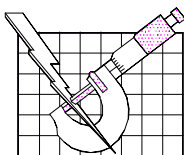
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We always appreciate your input. Please send any questions, comments or topic suggestions to the editor, Lyn Cosby, at [Lcosby@hoodpd.com](mailto:Lcosby@hoodpd.com) or fax (404) 299-3534.

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#### inside:

- Alternatives to NETA
- New NFPA 70E 2004
- Free *Testing Times* binder