

ti Current Trends

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Preventive Maintenance of Electrical Switchgear and Switchboards: Detailed Guidelines on Who, When and How

Introduction: Who is Authorized to Carry Out Preventive Maintenance

To ensure optimal maintenance and the best outcomes for your equipment, selecting the right service provider is essential. Whether you choose authorized service providers, in-house maintenance teams, or unauthorized service providers, each option can significantly affect the long-term performance, efficiency, and safety of your equipment. In this edition, we will explore which type of service provider is best suited for preventive maintenance and why making an informed choice is critical for sustaining the integrity of your operations.

1. Authorized Service Providers

Expertise: Using authorized service providers ensures that maintenance is performed by experts familiar with the specific equipment.

Using authorized service providers or vendors offers several key benefits, particularly when it comes to maintenance and repair services:

- a. Expertise and Specialized Knowledge:** Authorized service providers are trained and certified by the original equipment manufacturers (OEMs). This means they have a deep understanding of the specific equipment, including its design, functionality, and the most effective maintenance practices. Their specialized knowledge allows them to diagnose and address issues more accurately and efficiently compared to nonauthorized service centers.
- b. Genuine Parts and Tools:** Authorized service centers have access to genuine parts and specialized tools that are specifically designed for the equipment in question. This ensures that any replacements or repairs meet the original specifications of the equipment, preserving its performance, reliability, and safety.
- c. Compliance with OEM Standards:** Authorized providers follow strict protocols and guidelines set by the OEM. This adherence to standards ensures that maintenance and repairs are performed to the highest quality, reducing the likelihood of future issues and extending the lifespan of the equipment.

- d. Updated Training and Technology:** Authorized service centers receive regular updates and training from the OEMs about new technologies, equipment updates, and best practices. This ensures they are always equipped with the latest knowledge and tools to handle the most current models and any evolving issues.
- e. Quality Assurance and Accountability:** Since authorized service centers represent the OEM, they are held to high standards of service quality and customer satisfaction. If any issues arise, customers have the added assurance of being able to escalate their concerns directly to the OEM, ensuring accountability and resolution.
- f. Expert Consultations:** Authorized service centers, with their extensive experience and in-depth knowledge of the specific product, are in a better position to offer professional consultations. Their familiarity with the product's technical details and performance characteristics allows them to provide informed recommendations on usage, maintenance, and potential upgrades. Whether it's troubleshooting a complex issue, optimizing the product's performance, or advising on the best practices for long-term care, customers can rely on these centers for accurate and reliable guidance tailored to their specific needs. Often, this consultation is provided free of cost, as these centers are directly involved with the product and have a vested interest in ensuring its optimal performance and customer satisfaction.

In summary, using authorized service providers ensures that maintenance and repairs are performed with the highest level of expertise, quality, and reliability, which ultimately protects the customer's investment in the equipment.

2. Inhouse Maintenance Teams

Training and Certification:

Qualified Staff: Having inhouse teams trained and certified in the maintenance of the specific equipment they handle is always advantageous. These teams possess a deep understanding of the equipment's intricacies, allowing for prompt and accurate diagnosis and resolution of issues. Regular training updates are essential to ensure that these teams stay current with technological advancements and industry best practices. This continuous learning helps maintain the equipment's efficiency and prolongs its lifespan.

However, the industry today faces significant challenges in sustaining this model. One major issue is the need for continuous upgrades in training, which can be both time-consuming and costly. As technology evolves rapidly, keeping inhouse teams up to date requires ongoing investment in training programs, which can strain a company's resources. Additionally, high employee turnover rates exacerbate this challenge. Constantly training new staff members and bringing them up to speed on the latest technologies can lead to disruptions and inefficiencies.

Due to these challenges, many industries are increasingly shifting the responsibility of equipment maintenance to authorized service centers. By outsourcing this function, companies can ensure that their equipment is maintained by experts with the latest training and access to genuine parts. This approach allows businesses to focus on their core expertise and operations without the added burden of managing in-house maintenance teams. In the long run, partnering with authorized service centers can lead to more reliable maintenance, reduced downtime, and overall cost savings.

- 3. Unauthorized Service Providers:** A Growing Challenge in India, many organizations, particularly within procurement teams, often prioritize cost reduction in an effort to demonstrate efficiency. However, in doing so, they may opt to engage unauthorized service providers for the maintenance or repair of equipment. While this may appear cost-effective in the short term, it carries significant risks that can have serious long-term consequences for both operations and investments. Here are some of the key risks associated with using unauthorized service providers:
- a. Lack of Expertise and Training:** Unauthorized service providers often lack the specialized training and certification provided by the original equipment manufacturers (OEMs). This deficiency means they may not fully understand the intricacies of your equipment, leading to improper diagnoses, incorrect repairs, or the use of inappropriate techniques. Furthermore, many of these providers rely on temporary, unskilled, or retired laborers to fill their workforce, focusing more on increasing headcount than ensuring quality and expertise. This practice further compromises the reliability and effectiveness of the service, increasing the likelihood of equipment failure and long-term operational issues.
 - b. Use of Non-Genuine Parts:** One of the biggest risks with unauthorized service providers is the use of non-genuine or substandard parts. These parts are often cheaper but do not meet the OEM's specifications, leading to compatibility issues, reduced lifespan, and potential safety hazards.
 - c. Non-Compliance with Standards:** Authorized service centers adhere to strict protocols and quality standards set by the OEMs. Unauthorized providers, however, may not follow these standards.
 - d. Safety Risks:** Improper repairs or maintenance performed by unauthorized providers can create significant safety risks.

- e. **Lack of Accountability:** When you engage with an unauthorized service provider, you may have limited recourse if something goes wrong. These providers often do not offer the same level of customer service, warranty on repairs, or ongoing support that authorized centers provide. In the event of an emergency breakdown, particularly after the service has been completed, you might find yourself without any proper resolution or support, leaving your operations vulnerable and potentially leading to costly downtime.
- f. **Higher Long-Term Costs:** While unauthorized service providers might offer lower upfront costs, the long-term expenses can be significantly higher. The eventual replacement of damaged equipment and the need for repeated repairs can add up, making it a far more costly option in the long run.

Conclusion

Choosing an unauthorized service provider might seem cost-effective in the short term, but the risks involved can far outweigh any initial savings. To ensure the longevity, safety, and performance of your equipment, it's always advisable to rely on authorized service providers who have the expertise, access to genuine parts, and commitment to quality that your equipment deserves.

At Tech India, we pride ourselves on our unwavering commitment to quality, safety, and customer satisfaction as:

- **Authorized Service Centre**
- **Integrated Solution Provider**
- **Modernization Solution Provider**

Our dedication to excellence is further reinforced by our role with Lauritz Knudsen Electrical & Automation, formerly known as L&T Electrical & Automation and now a unit of Schneider Electric India Pvt. Limited.

In the upcoming edition, our aim is to provide a comprehensive guide on the timing (when) and methods for effectively carrying out Preventive Maintenance.....

To be continued in Volume.4 No.2 September 25th, 2024

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