PROVING DEAD: WHERE THE PROBES ACTUALLY GO

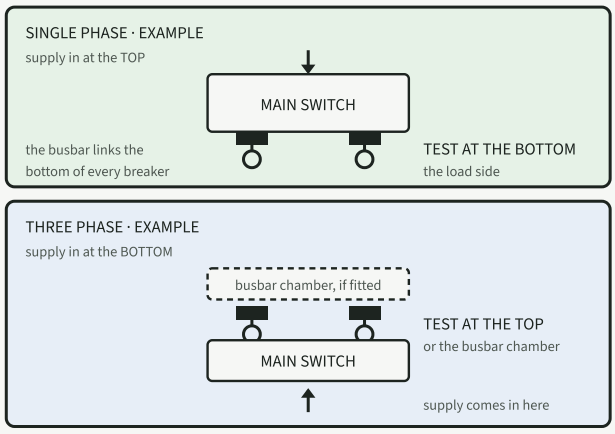
TOP OR BOTTOM OF THE MAIN SWITCH?

A favourite question. The rule is the same on every board: test on the **load (busbar) side** of the main switch, whichever end that is on the board in front of you, or in the busbar chamber.

SYSTEM	WHERE YOU TEST	WHY
Single phase	**Load (busbar) side** of the main switch — usually the bottom on a consumer unit, where the supply lands on top	The busbar links all the breakers and RCDs, so the load side of the main switch proves every circuit
Three phase	**Load (busbar) side** of the main switch, or the busbar chamber	Which end the supply comes in varies between boards, so find the busbar side on the board in front of you

✋ **At the board is not enough.** Go to the point of utilisation as well — the furthest point — and prove it dead there too, because of **borrowed neutrals**. A neutral taken from another circuit can leave your circuit live at a point while the board reads dead.

On larger three-phase installations there may be an open busbar chamber above the board carrying the line conductors. That gets safely isolated too.



The side you test is the side the busbar is on, and which end that is depends on the board, so look before you probe. On this single-phase example the supply lands on top and you test underneath; on this three-phase example the supply comes in underneath and you test on top. If there is an open busbar chamber above the board, that is live too and gets isolated with everything else.

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