

# DEFECT OF THE MONTH

OCTOBER 2017

## Unused Openings and Missing Cover Plates



Over the past year, ESA inspectors have identified more than 1,700 defects regarding missing cover plates and unused openings in electrical enclosures. Rule 12-3024 of the Ontario Electrical Safety Code (OESC) requires unused openings in boxes, cabinets, and fittings to be effectively closed by plugs or plates affording protection substantially equivalent to that of the wall of the box, cabinet or fitting.

Missing cover plates or unused openings left unplugged in electrical enclosures with energized conductors – such as panel boards, electrical outlets, disconnect switches, etc. – represent a shock hazard to individuals that have access to this area. It can also be a fire hazard if an object falls inside one of these enclosures and causes an arcing fault between energized conductors or if the electrical device fails in close proximity to combustible. For example, a receptacle with missing cover plate may cause the adjacent wood panels to catch on fire in event of failure. The cover would usually mitigate that hazard.



ESA strongly recommends maintenance staff and facility operators perform periodic inspections to ensure unused openings in electrical enclosures are filled properly and all cover plates on electrical devices are in place.

