



March 28, 2025

VESDA System Installations – Jurisdictional Responsibilities and Best Practices

VESDA Systems or Very Early Smoke Detection Apparatus (VESDA) Systems are specialized air sampling smoke detection systems designed to identify fire hazards at the earliest possible stage. They continuously draw air samples through a network of piping to a highly sensitive detection unit, allowing for immediate response to minute smoke particles – far earlier than standard detection systems.

Common installations of VESDA systems include:

- Data Centers and Server Farms
- Telecommunications Facilities
- Clean Rooms and Laboratories
- Museums and Archives
- Hospitals and Healthcare Environments

With the rapid expansion of data center construction and other sensitive facilities like those listed above, the use of VESDA systems has increased, bringing greater scrutiny to construction jurisdictional assignments on these types of projects.

Jurisdiction Responsibilities

A March 22nd & 23rd, 1994 IBEW/United Association (UA) Joint Committee Agreement establishes the following jurisdictional split for VESDA systems installations:

- UA Members: Responsible for the complete installation of the air sampling piping system, regardless of the material used.
- IBEW Members: Responsible for the complete installation of the electrical system, regardless of voltage.
- Control Cabinets and Panel Boards: Install in accordance with a UA-IBEW Panel Board Memorandum of Understanding dated August 28, 1968.

It is important to note that the UA is now actively asserting its jurisdiction over the air sampling piping portion of VESDA installations in many regions of the country. Prior practices where limited energy electrical contractors may have completed entire VESDA installations do not override the terms of the jurisdictional agreement and NECA does not have guidance to the contrary at this moment.

Best Practices for Managing Jurisdictional Responsibilities and Disputes:

- **Review the Full Scope of Projects Early:** Examine all specifications, drawings, and project scopes during the bidding process to identify potential jurisdictional overlaps – especially on specialty systems like VESDA.

- **Coordinate with General Contractors and Construction Managers:** Notify GC's or CM's early of the jurisdictional split to ensure bid packages and scopes of work are properly assigned and contractually clear.
- **Pre-Job Conferences:** Conduct pre-job or pre-construction meetings to review work assignments, prevent misunderstandings, and ensure jurisdictional clarity before work starts.
- **Maintain Thorough Records:** Keep detailed documentation of scope reviews, meetings notes, communications, and any jurisdictional agreements made for each project.
- **Avoid Workarounds:** Bypassing jurisdictional lines may result in grievances, back-pay claims, or project delays.

If your company is awarded a contract or subcontract involving a VESDA system, review the project scope immediately and coordinate with the appropriate trades to ensure compliance with the national jurisdictional agreements. NECA members are encouraged to bring any alleged disputes by the UA to their NECA Chapter immediately.

This material is for informational purposes only. The material is general and is not intended to be legal advice. It should not be relied upon or used without consulting a lawyer to consider your specific circumstances, possible changes to applicable laws, applicable CBAs, prime contracts, subcontracts, rules and regulations and other legal issues. Receipt of this material does not establish an attorney-client relationship.

IBEW - UA Joint Committee Minutes

March 22nd & 23rd, 1994

The meeting convened at 10:00 a.m. in Washington, DC at the IBEW Building, 15th Street, N.W.

Committee members present were:

U.A.

Ed Messmore
William F. Giles
Sid C. Stolper
Gene Minix
James B. Henley

IBEW

Ray Edwards
Charles W. Fisher
Patrick Reilly
Frank Carroll
Don Batterson
Don Lounds

Minutes of the July ²² ~~27~~ & ²³ 28, 1993 meeting was read and approved.

March ²³ ~~24~~, 1994 meeting began at 8:00 a.m.

Joint Issue #2 - Vesda Early Fire Alarm System. Director Ed Messmore presented the U.A. position regarding this type system. The IBEW submitted information and remarks as to installation of various components of the system. Following discussion the IBEW requested a caucus.

The meeting resumed with further discussion and both sides explained opinions as to work separation. The joint

committee agreed that Vesda type smoke detection air sampling systems will be installed in the following manner:

Air sampling lines shall be installed by U.A.

Electric wiring shall be installed by IBEW.

Air detector cabinets will be installed as indicated in the U.A. - IBEW Panel Board Memorandum of Understanding dated August 28, 1968.

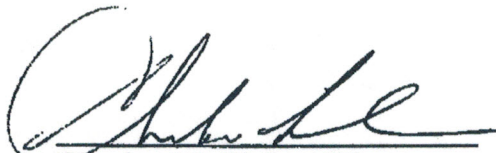
Ray Edwards
Chairman

Secretary

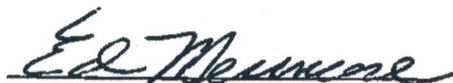
VESDA SYSTEMS

At the UA/IBEW Joint Committee Meetings of March 22 and 23, 1994, it was agreed that the installation of VESDA (Very Early Smoke Detection Apparatus) type systems would be completed as follows:

1. The complete installation of the air sampling piping system, regardless of materials used, would be performed by members of the United Association.
2. The complete installation of the electrical system, regardless of voltage, would be performed by members of the IBEW.
3. Control cabinets and panel boards would be installed as per the Panel Board Understanding dated August 22, 1968.



Charles W. Fisher, Director
Construction and Maintenance
IBEW



Ed Messmore, Director
Trade Jurisdiction
United Association

Date of Agreement: March 23, 1994