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THE ELECTRIC CURRENT

Meter-Rite®
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Electrical
PG 16

**SCADA Master Serves as
Data "Hub" for Enterprise
Software Integration**

Securing Golden
Screws "Just in
Case"

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-James "Jim" Bonner
Compliance Coordinator- Retired
Alabama Power



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COOLSHIRT[®]
LIQUID COOLED GARMENTS

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Securing Golden Screws “Just in Case”

Independent distributor Classic Components, employs a comprehensive strategy to mitigate supply chain disruption and avoid delays

For decades, the general wisdom in approaching manufacturing has been to rely on a “just in time” strategy to ensure component parts are available the moment they are needed rather than tying up capital to purchase and store inventory. However, with the recent supply chain disruptions that have been causing delays across industries, there is an argument to be made for holding “just in case” (JIC) inventory as well. This is especially important for “golden screws,” the one or two critical components that are needed to finish production and start generating revenue.

While the “just in time”(JIT) philosophy has been effective for over 30 years now, the recent disruptions that have been happening in the supply chain are unpredictable. In the past six years, these disruptions have been more severe and unanticipated, upsetting a relative stability that had existed for some time. Suddenly, parts are completely unavailable, a problem that has been increasingly troublesome over the last 18 months.

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“When there is supply chain harmony, when everybody is delivering on time and there is plenty of inventory in distribution, “just in time” works really well, but that is not the current reality and as COVID taught us, you can never anticipate the next event,” says Mike Thomas, vice president and global general manager at Classic Components, a premier independent distributor based in Torrance, CA. “This makes the “just in case” inventory philosophy a crucial piece of the profitability puzzle moving forward.”

JIC is not a new concept, but it is a “now” concept given the instability in the past six years. It is an inventory management strategy where companies keep inventory on hand to anticipate and prepare for unpredictability of demand or the times. The strategy is typically employed in less industrialized countries where disruptions in the supply chain are more common and maintaining more inventory in case of emergency is critical to avoid production delays and other inefficiencies.



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“Just in case” means having specific critical items in stock all the time so that when a situation arises like COVID, civil unrest, countries in conflict, or whatever else you can think of that disrupts the supply chain, we still have enough critical electronic components on hand to continue to manufacture our products. Even if it is not as profitable, you remain operational,” says Thomas.

Thomas believes in balancing “just in time” inventory, which helps businesses keep their inventory low and their capital high, with JIC, particularly of items that may be essential to the continued profitability of their business. A term that is gaining traction to describe such parts is the “golden screw,” an item that at times is difficult to procure but is essential to doing business.

“There are a lot of “golden screws” now that companies just couldn’t get their hands on and there were many products that couldn’t even be shipped. So, now they are meeting and shifting their strategies to ensure they always have the golden screws in the future,” Thomas notes.

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Combining these two inventory strategies gives organizations the best of both worlds – the low inventory and available capital of JIT with the security of JIC – and Classic Components can offer its partners this type of balance when it comes to electronic components.

“With companies like ours, we invest our own money to purchase items for customers ahead of time. We keep a certain amount in buffer stock, and we ship it out when needed and then we get paid by the customer. In doing so, the customers achieve their goal of having only what they need, when they need it, which is basically “just in time” philosophy,” explains Thomas.

To accomplish this, the company invests its own capital to secure “golden screw” items for customers and hold them in inventory until they are needed, however long that might take. This is a unique offering within the independent channel and only the largest, most financially stable distributors are willing or able to do so.

However, customers need to be willing to shift their strategy to accommodate a JIC philosophy. Organizations must have the foresight and awareness to anticipate future orders not yet placed and be proactive about securing that inventory required to ensure there are no delays when the product is needed.

Thomas adds that the items that have been difficult to find are not always complicated parts. OEMs require simple electronic components to make products in the same way nails and screws are required to construct a house.

“It is important to adopt a “just in case” philosophy both for less sophisticated items along with higher end items as well, to cover all the bases,” says Thomas. “To extend the construction analogy, if a house is built with nails and screws, it will also require expensive fixtures to be completed.”

The distributor can help secure these items for the

OEM without asking for money up front and assist with the logistics of transporting the items when needed. They do this by being flexible in their approach and shipping material, whether upstream or downstream, including to contract manufacturers, sister companies, and subsidiaries.

Not many companies are offering this type of service during shortages, including traditional distributors.

Although authorized distributors provide added value such as engineering support, contractual obligations dictate all materials must come directly from the factory. This makes sense when the supply chain is operating as expected, and there are no global pandemics or other supply chain constraints. The current disruptions, however, are creating lead times in the regular distribution space of up to 50 weeks for parts that used to be available in eight to 18 weeks, a massive disruption that independent distributors can work around more easily.

Regular authorized distributors may also struggle to get parts because the contractual agreement that these companies sign prevents them from sourcing products in the open market. Independent distributors like Classic Components can lock in prices and delivery dates using its vast network of supply chains and partners for many months at a time. This ensures that the inventory will be there when the customer needs it and not sold to someone else.

“It is a philosophical adjustment. Companies have to look in the mirror and say: we built our organization on “just in time” and that is how our shareholders measure us, but we need to secure the “golden screws” to protect against any possible future disruptions,” says Thomas.

For more information, contact Classic Components Corp. 23605 Telo Avenue, Torrance, CA 90505; www.classic-ic.com; 310.539.5500; info@class-ic.com.

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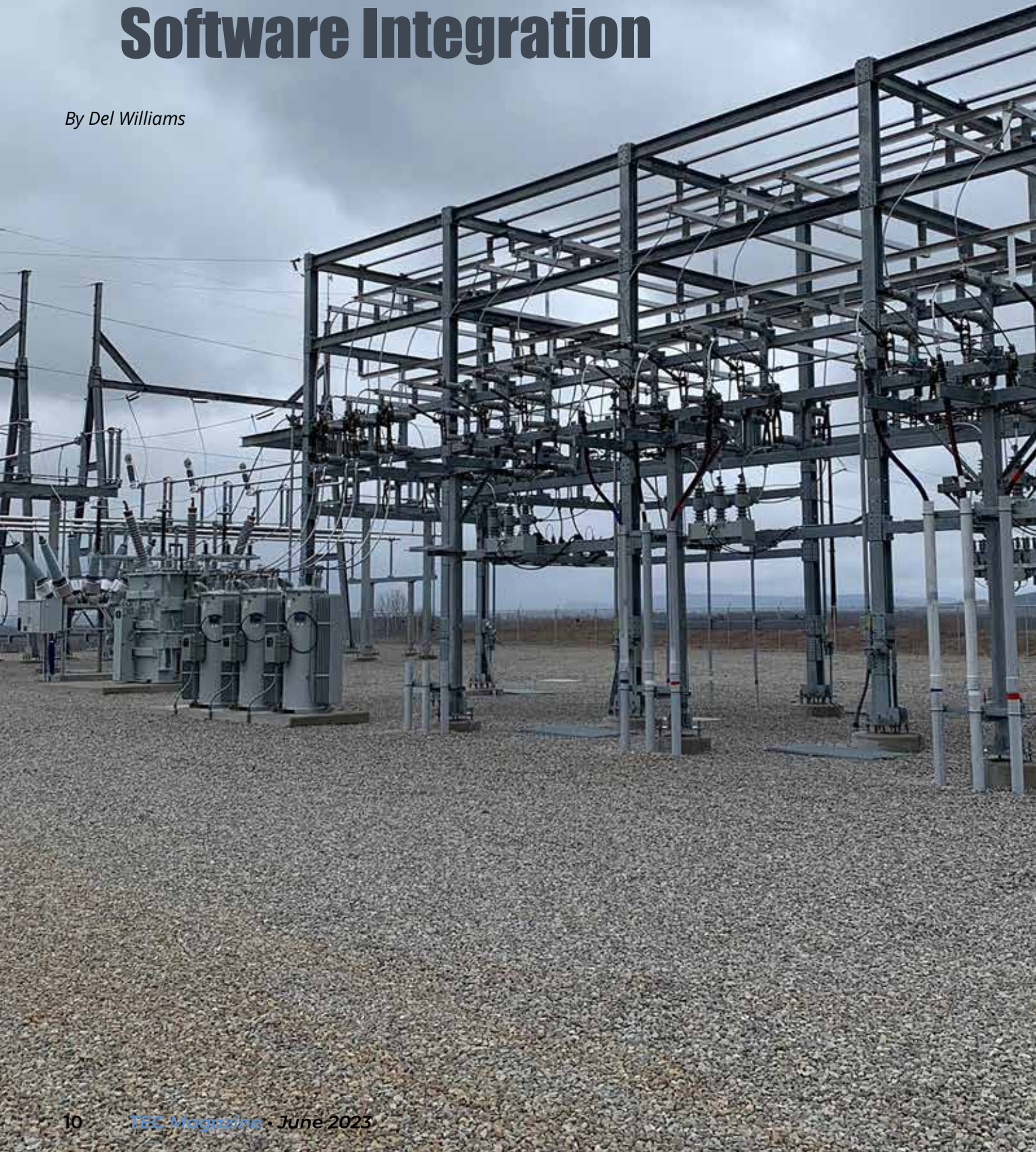
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SCADA Master Serves as Data “Hub” for Enterprise Software Integration

By Del Williams





To meet the requirements of small municipal utilities and co-ops, a leading SCADA substation automation platform has evolved to serve as a communication and coordination “hub” with third party enterprise software systems

For smaller municipal utilities and co-ops, it can be a challenge to upgrade and automate existing distribution substations and support infrastructure due to constraints in space, budget, labor, technical skills, and system compatibility. Many still have not installed SCADA systems for the remote management and control of multiple substations. Others have SCADA but seek to incrementally adopt increasingly essential enterprise software solutions such as outage management systems, dispatch software, advanced metering infrastructure, geographic information systems, and automatic line sectionalizing, adding to the difficulty. These enterprise systems are typically available from multiple third-party vendors, complicating integration with the existing systems typically found in small utilities. Large, investor-owned utilities (IOUs) can avoid integration issues since they generally procure comprehensive enterprise software packages...but these systems are too costly and complicated for smaller utilities. Co-ops and munis need affordable, scalable enterprise solutions that can access and share any of the data from the substation, seamlessly.

In response to that need, leading communication, and automation platforms – which for decades have served as the substation “hub” of SCADA systems – are now serving up valuable substation status information to third-party enterprise software through the adoption of established communication protocols such as MultiSpeak. In doing so, municipal utilities and co-ops can utilize the enterprise software they need to increase system efficiency and reliability on their own timelines and budgets.

“By incorporating an established industry protocol like MultiSpeak, the SCADA master can disseminate critical information at the substation level



that can improve the effectiveness and accuracy of enterprise software. This provides small municipal utilities and co-ops with a solution that facilitates the integration of third-party software into their overall operation that is ready and able to communicate with their SCADA system,” says Ray Wright, Senior VP, Marketing for NovaTech Automation, a substation automation company that has served the power transmission and distribution market for more than 40 years.

NovaTech’s Orion Substation Automation Platform has long served the industry as a communication and automation processor that can connect to nearly any substation device in its native protocol, perform advanced math and logic, and securely present the source or calculated data to any number of clients in their own protocol. The Orion system can be integrated with any equipment, including competitors.

“The automation platform has always been an enterprise hub for in-substation data. As a SCADA Master,

the platform can now also disseminate substation data into enterprise applications such as outage management software, GIS, dispatch, AMI, and AMR,” says Wright.

According to Wright, NovaTech decided to incorporate MultiSpeak into the Orion substation platform after receiving repeated requests from customers. MultiSpeak was initially developed by The National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) in 2000 to facilitate communication between automated metering platforms and billing systems. Over the years, MultiSpeak has been refined into a common standard for integrating myriad enterprise software systems. Today, it is used by over 800 utilities in over 20 countries.

“We had dozens of customers that said MultiSpeak was a requirement. So, we wrote the spec, and our engineering group incorporated it. Now smaller utilities do not have to purchase a costly, ‘one-size fits all’ enterprise software package – only what they need and can afford,” says Wright.

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LED HIGH BAY LIGHT FH7

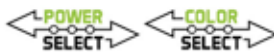


HG-H07-100W
100 Watts | 16000 Lumens | Replaces 250/320W Metal Halide

HG-H07-150W
150 Watts | 24000 Lumens | Replaces 320/400W Metal Halide

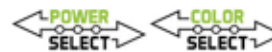
HG-H07-200W
200 Watts | 32000 Lumens | Replaces 400/750W Metal Halide

FOOD GRADE LIGHTING FH6



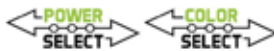
HG-HL06-200W
200 Watts | 28000 Lumens | Replaces 320/400W Metal Halide

LINEAR HIGH BAY LIGHT FLL3



HG-LL-160W(1*2)
160* Watts | 24000 Lumens | Replaces 150/320W Metal Halide

LED BACK-LIT PANEL LIGHT FP1



FU-GRUL40W(2*2)
40* Watts | 5400 Lumens | Replaces 2*F32T8

FU-GRUL50W(2*4)
50* Watts | 6750 Lumens | Replaces 3*F32T8

*40W: Options 30W/36W/40W
50W: Options 30W/40W/50W

HG-LL-320W(1*4)
320* Watts | 38400 Lumens | Replaces 320/750W Metal Halide

*160W: Options 96W/128W/160W
320W: Options 192W/256W/320W

NovaTech is now using MultiSpeak to share information with several leading outage management systems and will create protocol extensions to disseminate data to many other enterprise packages such as Dispatch, AMI, and GIS.

For co-ops and municipal utilities, incorporating an outage management system (OMS) can expedite a response to the community's concerns when a power outage occurs. Using MultiSpeak, Orion SCADA can provide breaker status to the OMS, simplifying configuration and implementation.

Dispatch software is another popular option and can facilitate more efficient dispatching of utility trucks and crews to make repairs during an outage or for routine maintenance tasks. This may include mapping, vehicle monitoring, routing, and real-time GPS tracking. Data from Orion SCADA can provide crews with additional indication of what needs to be repaired (i.e.-relay, switch, modem, AC supply, power supply, comm card, etc.) so they can be better prepared with needed spares and tools.

Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI) and Automatic Meter Reading (AMR) systems allow electric utilities to collect and harness the power of smart meters for load monitoring, load control/demand response, distributed generation, and customer engagement. When AMI is combined with historical load data from SCADA devices, algorithms can be developed to monitor and alert utility employees of large load imbalances and corresponding voltage imbalance that can damage grid and customer devices and equipment.

To enhance communication and decision making, assets such as meters, utility poles, and pole and feeder mounted monitoring equipment may be mapped and coordinated through a GIS mapping company. The sharing of data via MultiSpeak between GIS and Dispatch, OMS and SCADA facilitates more efficient dispatching and routing of utility trucks and service crews. When provided with specific outage data from the SCADA Master, crews can also bring all necessary tools and materials to

service the equipment, shortening the duration of any outage.

Fault location, isolation, and service restoration (FLISR) can also be expedited with full coordination between substation and enterprise data. FLISR technology can be used to automatically restore power to customers in the event of a permanent fault to restore service as quickly as possible. FLISR systems require exceptional coordination between technologies such as SCADA, OMS, distribution management systems, automated feeder switches and reclosers, line monitors, communication networks, as well as grid analytics, models, and data processing tools.

Despite the single-supplier attractiveness of comprehensive "one size fits all" enterprise software systems, their cost and complexity have traditionally presented major obstacles to implementation by smaller munis and co-ops. Alternatively, using "best-in-class" packages – for OMS, Dispatch, AMI, GIS, FLISR, and SCADA – and knitting them together into a complete system via MultiSpeak, is more economically justified and manageable for smaller utilities.

"The combination of best-in-class enterprise packages, a modern SCADA data hub, and MultiSpeak enable coops and munis to implement systems that rival the functionality and value of the larger IOU systems," says Wright. "These utilities can add enterprise packages as needed, maybe starting small with SCADA and OMS, then adding Dispatch and others. Add the suppliers of these smaller, purpose-designed packages can move faster, enhancing functionality quickly. For example, the Orion SCADA data hub is offering new options for data dissemination including the ICCP protocol (for transferring data between SCADA/EMS systems) and new techniques for exporting archived data to analysis and reporting packages. Stay tuned for more."

For more information on SCADA solutions from NovaTech Automation, visit www.novatechautomation.com or call (913) 451-1880. •

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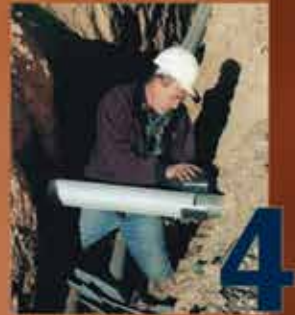
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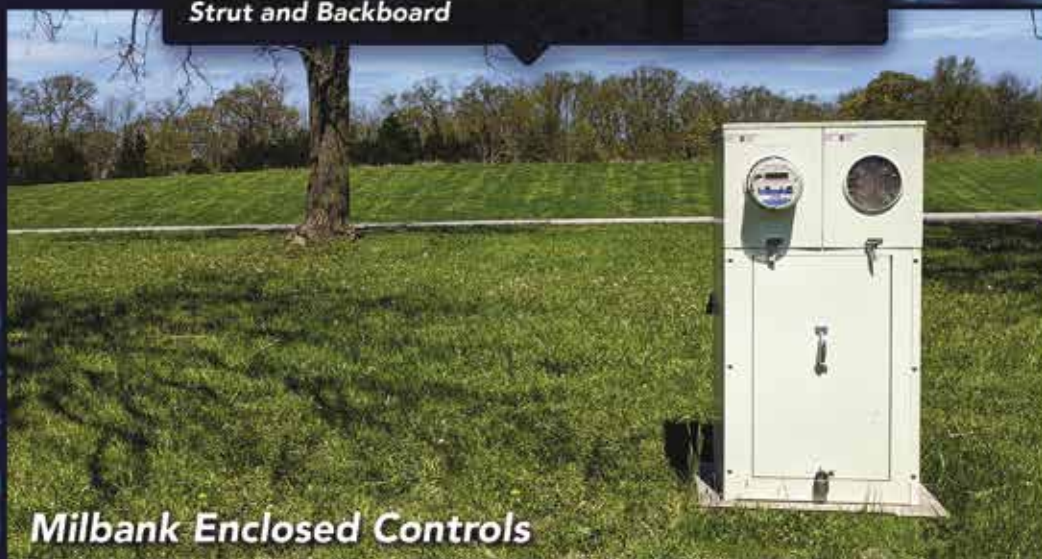


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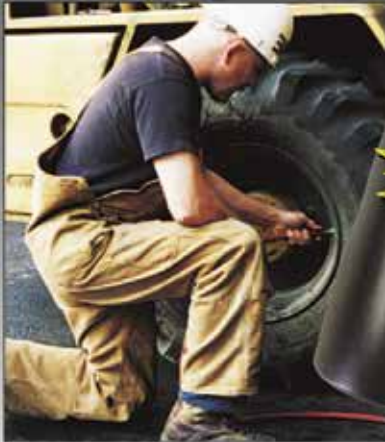
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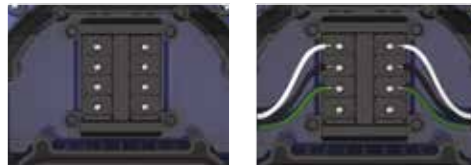


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