Three-phase combination magnetic starters have two distinct circuits: a power circuit and a control circuit.

The power circuit consists of a circuit breaker or fused line switch, contacts, and overload heaters connecting incoming power lines L1, L2, L3 and the three-phase motor.

The control circuit consists of the magnetic coil, overload contacts, and a control device such as a pressure switch. When the control device contacts are closed, current flows through the magnetic contactor coil, the contacts close, and power is applied to the motor. Hand-Off-Auto switches, start timers, level controls, and other control devices may also be in series in the control circuit.

**Line Voltage Control**

This is the most common type of control encountered. Since the coil is connected directly across the power lines L1 and L2, the coil must match the line voltage.

**Low Voltage Transformer Control**

This control is used when it is desirable to operate push buttons or other control devices at some voltage lower than the motor voltage. The transformer primary must match the line voltage and the coil voltage must match the secondary voltage of the transformer.

**External Voltage Controls**

Control of a power circuit by a lower circuit voltage can also be obtained by connecting to a separate control voltage source. The coil rating must match the control voltage source, such as 115 or 24 volts.