



Electrical Safety

May 2010

May is National Electrical Safety Month, but electrical safety in the workplace deserves daily attention.

Electrocutions occurring between 1982 and 1994 were studied by the National Institute of Occupational Safety & Health (NIOSH) in 1998. The NIOSH researchers, Kisner & Casini, analyzed 224 electrocutions which resulted in 244 workplace fatalities. These fatalities accounted for approximately 7% of all workplace deaths. The information they learned provides valuable lessons for everyone that works with or around electricity.

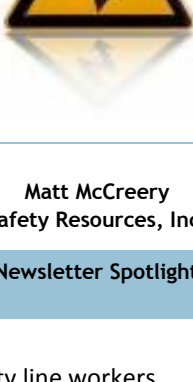
- Younger males die most often. Victims ranged in age from 17- 70 years, 99% of them were men, 64% died prior to age 35, and 99% of the incidents involved alternating current (AC).
- New hires need to take the most care. 41% of all victims were on the job for under 1 year.
- Construction workers had the highest percentage of electrocutions at 40%. Other predominate industries included: transportation/communication/public utilities (16%); manufacturing (12%); and agriculture/forestry/ fishing (11%).

Utility line workers (linemen) typically receive extensive training in electrical safety, yet they had the highest number of fatal injuries. 55% of linemen fatalities were caused by failure to use required Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) such as gloves, sleeves, mats, or blankets. Laborers, who generally receive little or no electrical training had the next highest fatality rate.

NIOSH identified five case scenarios describing the 244 fatalities: 1) Direct worker contact with an energized power line (28%); 2) Direct worker contact with energized equipment (21%); 3) Boomed vehicle contact with an energized power line (18%); 4) Improperly installed or damaged equipment (17%); and 5) Conductive equipment contact with an energized power line (16%).

Some points to remember:

- Make sure, not only that the electrical equipment is grounded, but also that the electrical service is grounded.
- Don't use electrical tools that do not have a grounded plug unless they are double insulated and were not manufactured with a ground pin. .
- Don't use electrical tools while standing on or in contact with metal ladders or work platforms.
- Inspect flexible electrical cords and connections for damage before you use the equipment.
- Don't perform work on or close to energized electrical equipment unless the power is locked out and you are qualified to do this type of work.
- If you see defective electrical tools or service cords, take them out of service and report them at once.
- Be alert for the electrical hazards that others may create for themselves and you. If you see hazards, let me know about them.



Matt McCreery
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Newsletter Spotlight

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