

Electrical Safety in Construction



Electric shock is a primary cause of death and serious injury in the construction industry. According to NIOSH, greater than 400 electrocution fatalities occur annually, with contacting an overhead power line being the most frequent incident. Electric shock can paralyze the heart, cause serious burns, and cause involuntary reactions that can lead to serious injuries.

Observe these tips for working safely with electricity:

- Treat all wires as live wires.
- Never touch dangling wires, but report them to your supervisor.
- Unless you are a qualified electrician, do not attempt electrical repairs.
- Use GFCI (ground fault circuit interrupters) or implement an assured equipment grounding program.
- Ensure that qualified persons implement lockout/tagout procedures and require testing of the circuit prior to working on electrical equipment.
- Report tripped circuits immediately. Tripped circuits may indicate an overload or short in the system.
- Never use electrical cords that have physical damage.
- Do not use extension cords as a substitute for permanent wiring.
- Use plastic cages or guards in temporary lighting to prevent accidental contact or breakage of bulbs.
- Never drag cords over sharp edges.
- Never pull equipment by the cords, it can damage the wires and cause a short.
- Never allow equipment or traffic to run over cords. This can damage them internally.
- Verify that the extension cord has the designation “S” (e.g., ST, SO, STO, etc.) in the cord marking to indicate that it is approved for hard service.
- Regularly inspect all electrical equipment for any cracks or breaks in the cords.

When used as intended, electricity is a labor saving service. When it is released in an uncontrolled manner, or when it is used with ignorance, it can injure, maim and kill. Always treat electricity with the respect it deserves. If you are not qualified to work on electrical equipment, leave electricity alone.

LOSS CONTROL CENTER

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