Tool Box Talks – Electrical Safety

Background
Over the past few years, electrical fatalities have increased by nearly 15%, and electrical exposure has moved up on the list of job-related fatalities. The majority of these deaths come from electrocutions, but a few are seen with electrical burns, as well as fires and explosions.

Basic OSHA Requirements
In hopes of preventing these unfortunate events from occurring, OSHA requires that all electrical equipment must abide by certain standards:
- Any metal framework on a moving device/machine is required to be grounded. This includes lights that may be somewhere on the machine.
- All circuit breakers and fuse boxes need to be labeled and state where in the facility they provide power. Any holes in electric boxes need to be sealed off.
- Prior to installation, all electrical pieces need to be approved by a nationally-recognized testing laboratory for the exact place it will be in use.
- All machines must have:
  - A main power disconnect
  - A switch to avoid automatic restarting after a power failure
  - An emergency stop button and clearly-labeled controls easily accessible by the operator

Safety Precautions
To ensure worker safety, all employees must always keep these safety precautions in mind when on the job:
- Never assume that an overhead wire is not energized at a lethal voltage and safe to touch.
- Do not grab a power line that has dropped. This is a job for the electric utility company.
- Remain at least 10 feet away from overhead wires while performing work. If working high up, examine the area before beginning the job.
- If a wire falls on your car while inside it, keep driving away from it. If the engine stops, remain in your vehicle and do not let anyone touch it. Contact the electric utility company.
- Do not use electrical equipment while standing in water.
- Do not attempt to fix electrical devices or cords unless properly qualified.
- Have a professional electrician examine equipment that has been exposed to liquid before using.
- If in a damp work environment, check all cords and devices to determine if they are free of defects and ready to use.
- Always be cautious when working near anything electrical.
- Inspect extension cords before every use. If there is a splice, missing ground plug, etc., discard if it can’t be repaired.
Our safety evaluations, reports and recommendations are made solely to assist your organization in reducing hazards and the potential of hazards and accidents. These recommendations were developed from conditions observed and information provided at the time of our visit. They do not attempt to identify every possible loss potential, hazard or risk, nor do they guarantee that workplace accidents will be prevented. These safety evaluations, reports and recommendations are not a substitute for ongoing, well-researched internal safety and risk management programs. This report does not warrant that the property inspected and its operations are compliant with any law, rule or regulation.

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