

Respect the Power of Electricity

Electricity is a strong invisible force that gives power to machinery, lights, heaters, air conditioners, and many other types of equipment that we depend upon. However, electricity can be very dangerous, too. Accidental contact with electrical currents can cause injury, fire, extensive damage and even death. It is very important to remember that working with and around electricity requires your full attention and respect.

Regularly inspect your electrical tools

Inspect your electrical tools on a regular basis, including the large tools such as table saws, drill presses and bench grinders. Test your equipment first before starting to work. If any tool gives you a slight shock or smokes and sparks when the power is turned on, don't use it, but notify your supervisor immediately.

Make sure electrical equipment is properly grounded

Properly grounded electrical equipment can offer you protection if the equipment should malfunction. The third prong—or ground prong—on the power cord connects the tool to ground so that in the event of a malfunction, the electricity will go through this ground prong to earth and bypass your body. If the prong is broken off, you have no protection and all the electricity will go through your body.

Watch out for overhead power lines

It is very important to keep your distance from overhead power lines. Remember, high voltage power lines are not insulated. Also, be aware that there are laws that prohibit any work within six feet of lines that carry between 600 and 50,000 volts, and require a minimum distance of 10 feet from these lines when operating boom-type lifting equipment.

Do not misuse extension cords

Extension cords appear harmless, but they can do quite a bit of damage if they are misused. No extension cord can be kinked, tied in a knot, crushed, cut, or bent and still insulate the electrical current safely. An extension cord that is misused in this manner may cause a short circuit, fire or even electrical shock. Extension cords are to be used temporarily and never as a permanent source of power to equipment.

Practice good housekeeping

Electrical safety involves more than just ensuring that electrical equipment is in good working order, it also involves ensuring that you can get to the main power source as quickly as possible without climbing over obstructions in the event of an emergency.

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