

Mona Electrical Service, Inc.

THE SAFETY NET

A Quarterly Newsletter Devoted to
Jobsite Safety

Fall 1992

THE SAFETY COMMITMENT

Safety is not a new buzz word at Mona. We have strived over the years to do a good job on our safety program. Primarily, we feel we have a moral responsibility to provide a safe workplace. We have too often seen the pain and suffering a workplace accident can cause to shrink from doing what is necessary to prevent them.

There are also good economic reasons for all of us to be interested in reducing workplace accidents. From the worker's perspective, workmens compensation only pays a fraction of your lost wages. From a company's standpoint, the cost of workmen's compensation insurance is directly related to the company's safety record. The fewer accidents, the lower the cost, and the more competitive we can be in bidding work.

Finally, we must meet the legal obligations imposed on us by federal, state and local regulations. Continuous education and training and on-the-job vigilance is required to satisfy the requirements of new and continually changing rules and regulations.

This newsletter will attempt to increase the communication with our field forces regarding safety issues. We'd appreciate any suggestions or comments you may have either in writing or by calling Bob Wilson @ (301) 868-8400.

MOST COMMON ACCIDENTS AT MONA ELECTRIC

BACK INJURIES

Nationally, back pain is the second most common problem leading to time off the job. Back pain often results from improper handling of materials.

Learn proper lifting techniques and use them on the job. Read the safety guide which Mona will be inserting with your paycheck in the next couple of weeks.

IMPROPER USE OF LADDERS

Mona has taken care to provide you with the proper equipment, including ladders in good repair. If you notice a problem with a ladder, replace it immediately.

Our safety consultant has indicated that most of our fall accidents result from the improper use of a ladder.

Make sure the ladder fits the job-don't stand on the top rung.

ELECTRICAL SHOCK

While its true the great percentage of these accidents seem to occur to the least experienced, all too often an experienced electrician is also victimized as a result of becoming too comfortable with the situation.

Follow the proper procedures for turning off circuits, tagging or locking out, and testing before proceeding. Instruct those less experienced that are working with you. These accidents are clearly preventable.

Real Life Experiences

The following is a real life situation and workplace accident. What could have been done to prevent or mitigate the injury?

EXPERIENCED JOURNEYMAN ENDS CAREER WITH BACK INJURY

The day started like many others during his 15 years as an electrician. The traffic had been heavy on the ride in from Front Royal to the District, but he pulled onto the site at 6:15 and was on the 3rd floor by 6:30 to resume pulling wire.

Someone had left some material the previous evening across the entrance to the room where the wire had been locked up. With one foot on some conduit and another foot on the floor, he bent to pick up the spool of wire. While he felt a pull in his lower back, he ignored the pain, continued to carry the spool to the work area and finished the day. The next day he couldn't get out of bed.

Two disks in his lower back had been injured. The first surgery to fuse the disks was done soon afterwards. The second surgery was done the next year. Physical therapy continues but after 3 years, he is still unable to return to work. Workmen's compensation is only paying about 60% of what he was making before the injury. The union disability helps make up some of the difference but he's still in the hole and the unpaid bills continue to mount.

How could this injury have been prevented?

Just as athletes warm up before an event, so should workers warm up before attempting motions which will strain their muscles. Lifting puts great stress on the back muscles- warm up by doing some moderate stretching before attempting the lift.

Lift properly and only when you must. Size up the load and get help if you need it. Check the area over which you will be traveling and clear it. Request and use a back brace if appropriate. Get close to the spool with both feet flat on the floor, keep your back straight, and lift with your legs not your back. Avoid sudden twists.

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