Tool Box Talk: Electrical Safety

Electric shock can cause burns, shocks, falls and electrocution (death)

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, for the last decade, electrical injury has been responsible for an average of 320 workplace deaths and over 4,000 injuries involving days away from work annually in the United States.

Precautions for avoiding electrical shocks include, but not limited to the following:

**General safety precautions:**
Safety to personnel and safe operation of machines and tools should be of uppermost importance in all considerations of using electricity on the jobsite. Electrical problems are among the most commonly cited OSHA violations. There are many specific standards that address electrical safety. Refer to the OSHA regulations for specific applications.

**Ground Fault Circuit Interrupters:** The GFCI is a fast acting device that senses a small current leakage to ground. Within 1/40 of a second it shuts off the electricity and “interrupts” the current flow. It provides effective protection against shocks and electrocution. OSHA requires GCFIs or an assured equipment grounding conductor program on all construction sites and projects.

**Extension Cords:** Extension cords are convenient ways to provide power to portable equipment. However, they are often misused, resulting in injuries and expensive OSHA fines. The most important thing to remember is that extension cords are for temporary use only. Inspect extension cords for physical damage before use. Check wattage rating on the tool being used with the extension cord; do not use an extension cord that has a lower rating. Don’t use extension cords marked for indoor use outdoors. Don’t plug on one extension cord into another.

**Electrical Fires:** On construction sites, an electrical fire that may occur is when portable tools overload a power source. If possible to do safely, immediately disconnect the tool or power cord from the power source; this usually results in the electrical fire being extinguished. A Class C or multi-purpose fire extinguisher may also be used to ensure the fire is out.

ELECTRICAL SAFETY

Do:
- Do inspect all electrical equipment daily prior to use, and tag as needed and report damaged tools to supervisor.
Through the OSHA and SWRInstitute Alliance, the SWRInstitute developed this toolbox talk for informational purposes only. It does not necessarily reflect the official views of OSHA or the U.S. Department of Labor.
Review Questions:

1) A GFCI senses electrical leakage?
   A) True
   B) False

2) A Fire extinguisher should not be onsite all times in case of electrical or other types of fire?
   A) True
   B) False

3) Worn extension cords should be removed from service?
   A) True
   B) False

4) The human body has a low resistance to electricity; this makes it a good conductor?
   A) True
   B) False

Talk Given By: ___________________________    Date: ______________________
Company: _______________________________    Location: ___________________

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