

# Fatality Narrative

## Worker Electrocuted when Irrigation System Contacts Overhead Power Line\*

**Industry:** Irrigation assembly

**Release Date:** May 9, 2002

**Occupation:** Construction laborer/operator

**Case No.:** 02WA019

**Task:** Truck-mounted crane lifting end tower of pivot irrigation circle into place to assemble

**SHARP Report No.:** 71-1-2002

**Type of Incident:** Electrocution

On February 12, 2002 a section of an irrigation system being lifted by a crane contacted an overhead power line killing a 28 year-old construction laborer/operator. The victim was standing on the ground operating the truck-mounted crane to lift a section of an irrigation system into place. He was lifting the end tower of a pivot irrigation circle system onto a dolly so that it could be moved out into the field where it could be attached to the rest of the assembled system. This section was 80 feet longer than previously assembled sections and extended under power lines. It came into contact with a 7620 volt ac power 3 phase system distribution line. The power went through the section, the truck, the operator and into the ground. The victim had one year of experience in the assembly of irrigation systems. He did not belong to a union. At the time of the incident the weather was clear and cold and it was near dusk. He had been working for the company for about a year.

### Requirements/Recommendations

- Evaluate job site before beginning work to determine how best to move and place the crane.
- If possible, avoid using cranes in the vicinity of overhead power lines.
- When operating cranes near overhead power lines maintain proper clearance distances. Remember the 10 foot rule. Keep vehicles, equipment, tools, and people at least 10 feet from overhead power lines.
- Consider all overhead power lines to be energized unless the utility company or owner of the line has confirmed that it is de-energized and grounded.
- A qualified worker should be assigned to observe clearance during crane movement and operation and alert the operator if necessary. This observer should have no other duties during crane movement and operation.
- If possible, have power lines de-energized and visibly grounded by the utility company or owner prior to work around them. .
- Operate the crane more slowly when near power lines.

**State Wide Statistics:** This was the 1<sup>st</sup> of 3 work-related electrocutions in Washington State during the month of February 2002 and was the 7<sup>th</sup> work-related death of the year.

---

\* This bulletin was developed at the Washington State Department of Labor and Industries to alert employers and employees in a timely manner of a tragic loss of life of a worker in Washington State. We encourage you to consider the above information as you make safety decisions for or recommendations to your company or constituency. The information in this notice is based on preliminary data ONLY and does not represent final determinations regarding the nature of the incident or conclusions regarding the cause of the fatality.