

Fatality Narrative

Electrical Contractor Electrocuted After Contacting Energized Conductors*

Industry: Electrical contractors
Occupation: Contractor
Task: Installing electrical circuit

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On June 21, 2006, an electrical contractor was electrocuted after making contact with an energized circuit in a breaker panel. The 75-year-old victim had about 50 years experience as an electrician. He was contracted by the supervisor of a sand and gravel mine to install conduit and a breaker for a new wash plant and water pump. The plant supervisor asked the victim if the old wash plant could operate while he worked on the electrical installation at the new plant. The victim indicated that the old plant could be operated. The victim then went to the motor control center where he accessed the 480 volt electrical panel which supplied power to the old wash plant and was to be the power source for the new wash plant. Shortly after 9 a.m. the power went off at the old wash plant. An employee went to the motor control center to investigate and found the victim leaning against the energized 480 volt components of the main breaker panel. Emergency rescue personnel were contacted and arrived to find the motor control center on fire. The fire was extinguished and the victim was pronounced dead. The cause of death was electrocution. An investigation determined that power to the electrical panel had not been shut off.



Requirements/Recommendations

(! Indicates items required by code)

- It is always recommended that electrical circuits be de-energized before working on the system or circuit.
- ! When working on de-energized electrical systems, ensure that it is properly locked out so that it can not be accidentally re-energized.
- ! When circuits cannot be de-energized, you must ensure that insulated tools and appropriate PPE are used for the energy source being worked on. Follow the NEC NFPA 70E 2004 Guidelines
- ! Make sure to use appropriate test devices, and test electrical energy before working on any system.
- All work should be thoroughly planned so that it can be done safely, and elements of the job should be evaluated so that it can be completed within expected guidelines.
- Conduct a risk assessment with each contractor to identify hazards and establish safe working procedures before work begins.

State Wide Statistics: This was the 34th out of 81 work-related fatalities in Washington State during 2006, and was the 8th out of 23 construction-related fatalities.

**This bulletin was developed at the Washington State Department of Labor and Industries to alert employers and employees of a tragic loss of life of a worker in Washington State. 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.*

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