

## Electrical work practices

### Initiative

On average, Minnesota OSHA investigates about two fatalities and three serious injuries involving electrical contact each year. These figures have trended slightly downward in recent years, but there is still much work to be done.

### Description of the hazard

Electricity has long been recognized as a serious workplace hazard. Practicing safe work habits can help to reduce the hazard. Examples of these practices include:

- de-energizing electrical equipment before inspection or repair;
- keeping electrical tools properly maintained;
- exercising caution when working near energized lines; and
- using appropriate protective equipment.

### Eliminating the hazard

Proper lockout/tagout procedures protect workers from the danger of energized electrical equipment. Securely tagging the switch or controls of the machine or equipment being locked-out of service clarifies to everyone in the area that equipment or circuits are being inspected or repaired. Prior to starting the inspection or repair, verification of the lockout should be conducted to ensure all energized sources have been eliminated.

Appropriate and properly maintained tools help protect workers against electrical hazards. It is important to maintain tools regularly to prevent them from deteriorating and becoming dangerous.

Before working under or near power lines, ensure workers maintain a safe distance from the lines. If working on power lines, ensure the lines have been de-energized and grounded by the owner or operator. When mechanical equipment is operated near overhead lines, employees standing on the ground should avoid contact with the equipment.

Employees who work directly with electricity should use the personal protective equipment required for the jobs they perform. This equipment may include rubber insulating gloves, hoods, sleeves, matting, blankets, line hose and industrial protective helmets designed to reduce electric shock hazards.

Ensure workers are properly trained and understand safe work practices. Your efforts will help prevent fatalities and serious injuries related to electrical hazards.

### For more information

Employers and employees with questions or concerns about these hazards should refer to 29 CFR 1910.269 and 29 CFR 1910 Subpart R, or call MNOSHA Compliance at (651) 284-5050 or toll-free at 1-877-470-6742.