



TOOLBOX TALK #25

MOBILE EQUIPMENT AND POWER LINES

We have frequent occasion to work with and around mobile equipment, such as cranes, boom trucks and forklifts. We also have occasion to erect projects in the vicinity of power lines. This is an important topic, because the hazard of electrocution is serious, deadly and real.

Most modern cranes protect the operator from electrocution in foreseeable instances. The greater danger is to those around the crane. In most accidents involving power lines, we find that the crew knew the power lines were there, everyone understood the consequences of contacting the power lines and there was no designated signalman. These accidents happened due to pure carelessness. Assume all electrical wires are hot. Make certain we all understand safety issues related to any erection project near power lines. Cranes should maintain a minimum of 30 feet of clearance from power lines, and if you see any violation of this policy, report it immediately, even if it's not one of our people. Remember, it's the people around the crane who face the greater danger of electrocution. A boom can conduct electricity without actually touching the power lines, so be on a high state of alert when working on a job site near power lines.

And, about this notion that wearing rubber soled sneakers as protection against electrical shock...it's nonsense. Rubber soled work boots might provide some limited protection if working on a metal roof that comes into contact with electrical current. But rubber boots and gloves provide only limited protection. Never assume you are insulated from the risk of electrocution because of some item you wear.

We can work safely in the vicinity of power lines as long as we all carry out our responsibilities. We will provide you with the information you need before starting any project, and we will plan each job around our strict safety policy. Once you have the information and a clear understanding of any electrical hazards associated with an erection project, you become the eyes and ears for yourselves and one another, to make sure our safety policies are carried out.

Facilitator Notes: Explain very seriously to your crew that electrocution is a particularly unpleasant injury. It's also one that has a very low rate of survival. If the current job site has power line exposure, survey the area and determine the minimum distance mobile equipment should be kept from a power line. Make sure everybody has a clear understanding of this and to immediately report any violations.

Additional Notes: _____

Crew Member Comments: _____

Presented By: _____ **Date/Time** _____

Attendees: _____

List additional attendees on back of sheet