

Working improperly with or near electricity can have severe consequences. Electricity is recognized as a serious workplace hazard. Employees may be exposed to electrical shock which can result in electrocution, serious burns, or falls that result in additional injuries. It is important to understand the hazards of electricity to make sure that injuries are prevented when working with or near it.

There are two ways that electricity can cause harm. The first way is electric shock caused by current passing through the body. This can cause severe burns and potentially dangerous uncontrollable physical movements. The second way is arc flash which is caused by a release of energy. This can result in blast injuries, lung injuries, ruptured eardrums, severe burns, and blindness that in severe cases could be permanent.

There are many factors that contribute to electrical hazards, but all of them are preventable. Be sure to inspect tools and equipment to ensure all cords are in good condition and that the ground prong is in place. Any damaged equipment should be taken out of service immediately for repair by a qualified person or be discarded. Ensure electrical outlets are never overloaded. Extension cords should not be used for long periods of time.

A general assessment can be applied to any potential electrical hazard. Ask yourself three questions: Who could be harmed? How has the degree of risk been established? What precautions do I need to take to control this risk? These three questions should take into consideration the type of electrical equipment used, the way it's used and the environment that it is used in.

Here are some other general life saving tips for electrical safety.

- Always inspect power cords and electrical fittings for damage and wear
- Do not use outlets or cords that have exposed wiring. This may result in shock
- Always ensure that cords are pulled from the plug and not from the cord
- Replace broken or damaged 3 pronged plugs

There are many different electrical hazards in the workplace. It is important to understand electrical safety and respect the dangers electricity presents. Eliminate any electrical hazards in your work area to avoid injury to yourself or a co-worker. Don't be a stranger to electrical danger!