



# TOOLBOX TALK

*Responding to Electrical Emergencies: Don't Become the Second Victim*

TOPIC NO.	DURATION	AUDIENCE
TBT 12	10 to 15 min	All Crew

**OSHA REFERENCE** 29 CFR 1910 Subpart S · 29 CFR 1926 Subpart K · Electrical Safety

PROJECT / JOBSITE	DATE	PRESENTED BY

## 01 THE HOOK

### START HERE

*An electrical emergency on a jobsite has one common pattern: a worker gets hurt, and someone instinctively rushes in to help. Then the helper gets hurt too. Now you have two casualties instead of one, and the rescue is twice as hard. Electricity doesn't care that you're trying to do the right thing. It will travel through anyone who completes the circuit. The single most important thing you can do in an electrical emergency is not become the second victim.*

## 02 WHY INSTINCTS GET PEOPLE KILLED

In a normal medical emergency, the right response is to **get to the victim fast**. In an electrical emergency, that instinct is wrong. Every second that current is still flowing, anything connected to it (the victim, a puddle, a metal beam, the wet ground around it) is part of the circuit. If you touch any of it, **you're part of the circuit too**.

So the rule for electrical emergencies is the opposite of the normal rule: **stop, scan, and shut off the power before you do anything else**. The few seconds you spend doing that are the seconds that keep this from becoming a multi-casualty event.

## 03 SCENARIO 1: DOWNED POWER LINE

### EMERGENCY TYPE

**A power line has fallen on the ground, a vehicle, a structure, or in water**

Live lines don't always look live. They don't spark. They don't whip around. They lay there looking dead while energizing everything around them, including the dirt, the puddle, and the vehicle they're draped across. The *instinct* is to clear the line so traffic can move or to pull it off something. The **correct response** is to keep your distance and call 911.

INSTINCT (DON'T)	CORRECT (DO)
<b>X</b> Walk over the line to clear the area	<b>✓</b> Stay back at least 35 feet and call 911

✗ Pull the line off your truck or your house	✓ Don't touch it. Wait for the utility crew
✗ Get out of your car if a line falls on it	✓ Stay in the vehicle until rescuers say it's clear
✗ Wade into water to reach a victim near a line	✓ The water is energized too. Stay back. Call 911

### ⚠ IF A LINE FALLS ON YOUR VEHICLE

Stay inside until trained responders arrive. The vehicle is acting as a barrier, but the moment your foot touches the ground while any part of you touches the metal, current flows through you. If the vehicle is on fire and you have to exit, jump clear (don't step out), keep your feet together, and shuffle away in small steps without lifting your feet from the ground.

## 04 SCENARIO 2: ELECTROCUTION VICTIM

### EMERGENCY TYPE

**A worker has been shocked and is down. They may still be in contact with the source**

#### STEP

# 1

### SHOUT TO CALL 911

Don't pause to dial yourself. Shout for someone, by name if possible, to call **911** **immediately** while you assess the scene. Every second matters once a heart rhythm is interrupted.

#### STEP

# 2

### LOOK BEFORE YOU TOUCH

Before you go anywhere near the victim, look at where they are. Are they **still in contact** with a wire, a tool, a panel, or a piece of equipment? Are they lying on a live conductor? Is the area around them wet? If they're still part of the circuit, **you can't touch them yet**.

#### STEP

# 3

### CUT THE POWER

Find the source and shut it off. Trip the breaker. Pull the disconnect. Unplug the cord at the receptacle. If you can't reach the source, find a **long, dry, non-conductive object** (fiberglass pole, dry wood) and use it to push the victim off the conductor or push the conductor off the victim. Never use anything metal or damp.

#### STEP

# 4

### CHECK BREATHING AND PULSE

Once the victim is clear of the source, check airway, breathing, and pulse. Electrical shock often interrupts heart rhythm, so **CPR or rescue breathing** may be needed immediately. If you're trained, start. If you're not, the 911 dispatcher will walk you through it.

#### STEP

# 5

### LOOK FOR OTHER INJURIES

Electrocution victims usually fall. Expect **burns** (often at entry and exit points), **broken bones**, bleeding, head injuries, and bruises from the fall. Don't move the victim more than necessary in case of spinal injury. Keep them still and warm until EMS arrives.

## 05 WHY IT MATTERS

### [ JOBSITE ]

#### FOR THE CREW

A crew that knows the right response saves a coworker's life and avoids turning one casualty into two. The wrong response on an electrical scene can compound an injury into a fatality.

### [ INDIVIDUAL ]

#### FOR YOU

You'll never plan for the day this happens. You'll just have whatever's rehearsed in your head. Knowing the four words (stop, scan, shut off, then act) means your hands know what to do when your brain freezes.

### [ HOME ]

#### FOR LIFE OFF-SITE

Storms drop lines on driveways. A kid sticks something in an outlet. Same physics, same rule. The first move in any electrical emergency is to control the source before you touch the victim.

## 06 TODAY'S DRILL

### TODAY'S DRILL SCENE WALK-THROUGH

Pick a coworker. Imagine they're down right now from contact with a live tool. Without moving, walk through the five steps out loud. Where's the nearest disconnect? Who calls 911? What's the nearest non-conductive object you could reach? If you don't know any of those answers, find them before you go back to work today.

## 07 CREW DISCUSSION

*Take 2 minutes. Pick one.*

1. Where is the main electrical disconnect for our work area? Could you find it in 10 seconds in an emergency?
2. Who on this crew is current on CPR? If you're not, when's the last time you took the class?
3. If a line came down on a coworker's vehicle right now, what would your first three moves be?

## 08 ATTENDANCE & SIGN-OFF

All attendees confirm they participated in this Toolbox Talk and understand the content covered.

NAME (PRINT)	SIGNATURE

SUPERVISOR SIGNATURE \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_



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