

# Electrical Safety toolbox talk

A simple, 5 minute outline of what to cover in a toolbox talk on Electrical Safety.

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A simple, 5-minute outline of what to cover in a toolbox talk on electrical safety in the workplace.

Electricity is an ever-present danger on most worksites, especially since it is invisible. The good news is with the right precautions and safety measures, these hazards can be significantly reduced.

This toolbox talk covers all the main workplace injuries that can be caused by electricity and how you and your employees can prevent them from happening.

## Why Run an Electricity Safety Toolbox Talk?

- Helps to prevent unnecessary injuries occurring in the workplace due to exposure to electricity.
- Makes sure staff understand safety regulations and standards.
- Makes sure companies/management understand safety regulations and standards.
- Fewer injuries mean higher productivity in the workplace.

## The 4 Main Types of Electrical Injuries

Four main types of electrical injuries can occur due to electricity. In this talk, we will go over each type of injury and then give you tips for how to prevent them.

### 1) Electricity Can Cause Burns

The first major injury caused by electricity is burns. Burns are caused when your body comes into contact with the electrical source, thermal burns from electricity, and, in some cases, when electrical sparks start fires. To prevent any of these scenarios from happening, you need to avoid any contact with live electricity. Here are some good tips:

- Make sure all extension and power cords are in good condition before using them. If they are damaged, throw them out or consult your supervisor.
- Only qualified electricians should work with exposed wires.
- Any high-voltage equipment or areas of a worksite must be clearly marked.
- Be extra careful when water is close to electricity.
- When working with electricity, ensure you wear the correct PPE.
- Don't come into contact with anyone who is in contact with an electrical current.

## **2) Can Cause Electric Shocks**

The next type of electrical injury is an electric shock which occurs when you come into contact with an electrical energy source. When you get an electric shock, it can burn you and give you anything from a mild jolt to more serious jolts that in some cases can be life-threatening. Electric shocks most commonly occur when working with faulty electrical tools and machinery as well as coming into contact with faulty power cords.

To avoid electric shocks, it's important to:

- Make sure when using electronic tools and machinery that they are in perfect working order. Pay special attention to ensure there are no exposed wires due to cracked insulation.
- When working with electricity, ensure you wear the correct PPE.
- It's also important to ensure you don't use electrical tools and equipment close to water.

## **3) Can Cause Electrocution**

The next cause is electrocution. This is more severe than an electric shock as electrocution is when the electrical current is so strong that it can enter your body, causing your heart to stop and/or serious injuries or even death. To avoid this, you need to make sure that:

- Be very careful when working around overhead and other power lines as any contact at all can cause electrocution.

- When working with electricity, ensure you wear the correct PPE.
- Only qualified electricians should work with wiring and carry out jobs involving open electricity. They need to ensure that they use the correct fuses, circuit breakers, and wiring when they are carrying out installations and repairs.
- If there is any risk at all in coming into contact with electricity, STOP what you are doing and consult a supervisor.

#### **4) Electricity Can Cause Falls**

The final major cause of injury due to electrical issues is when people fall due to electric shock when working at height. For example, if you are up a ladder working on something, and you get an electric shock, you can lose your balance and fall, which turns a minor shock into a serious workplace injury. To avoid this happening, make sure that you:

- Pay close attention to your work when working up high and close to electrical hazards. Before commencing work, try to find a safer way to do the job.
- Before you use a tool when high up, make sure that it is in perfect working condition.
- Ensure you are using the safest ladder or scaffolding for the job.

#### **Key Takeaways**

- *If possible, avoid working with or around electrical hazards.*
- *Wear the correct PPE when working with or around electricity—such as electrical gloves or specialty footwear.*
- *Make sure extension cords and power strips you are working with or around are in good condition and safely out of the way when working.*
- *Take your time when working with power tools.*
- *Ensure you handle electric tools correctly, and then safely store them when not in use.*
- *Never touch someone who has been exposed to electricity.*
- *Electrical work should only be completed by people who have the appropriate training, certification and experience.*

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