CrewSigned

Electrical Safety Toolbox Talk

5-minute read-aloud · Last reviewed November 24, 2026

Electricity is one of the leading causes of death in construction, and you do not have to be an electrician to get hurt by it. Laborers, roofers, painters, equipment operators and anyone carrying a ladder or a long pipe can make contact with a live line. Today we are going to go over how that happens and how we stop it.

Electricity always looks for a path to the ground. If your body becomes that path, current flows through you. Even a small amount can stop your heart. Electricity also causes serious burns, and a shock can make you fall from a ladder or a roof.

Overhead power lines are the biggest danger on many sites. They are not insulated for contact, even if they look coated. Before any work starts, we find out where the lines are. Stay at least ten feet away from lines up to 50,000 volts, and farther from bigger lines. That ten feet applies to you and to anything you are holding or moving, like ladders, scaffold poles, gutters, booms and dump bed raises. If we need to work closer, the utility has to be involved first.

Underground lines matter too. Before we dig, the lines get located and marked, and we respect those marks.

On the ground, watch the equipment you plug in. Use cords and tools with the ground pin in place. Check cords for cuts, crushed spots and exposed wire before you use them. Use ground-fault protection, either a GFCI outlet or a portable GFCI, on construction power. Keep cords and tools out of water and do not use electrical equipment with wet hands.

Only qualified people work on electrical circuits. If a panel needs to be opened, a circuit worked on or equipment repaired, the power gets shut off and locked out first, and someone tests to prove it is dead. Treat every wire as live until it has been tested.

If someone is being shocked, do not touch them. Cut the power if you can do it safely. If not, use something dry and non-conductive to separate them from the source, then call 911. If someone hits an overhead line with equipment, stay away from the machine and the ground around it and keep others back.

Discussion questions

1. Where are the overhead and buried power lines on this job, and how close will our work get to them?
2. Which cords, tools or panels have you seen on this site that looked damaged or unsafe?
3. If someone was being shocked and could not let go, what would you do and what would you not do?

OSHA standard

29 CFR 1910.333, Selection and use of work practices
https://www.osha.gov/laws-regs/regulations/standardnumber/1910/1910.333

SOURCES

Electrical Hazards: Controlling Electrical Hazards (OSHA 3075): https://www.osha.gov/sites/default/files/publications/OSHA3075.pdf
Electrical Safety QuickCard (OSHA 3294): https://www.osha.gov/sites/default/files/publications/OSHA3294.pdf
OSHA Safety and Health Topics, Electrical: https://www.osha.gov/electrical
NIOSH, Electrical Safety: Safety and Health for Electrical Trades: https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/publications/numbered/2009-113.html

This talk does not replace training that an OSHA standard requires. Scripts are based on OSHA and NIOSH publications and rewritten in plain language.

Safety Meeting Sign-In Sheet

TOPIC

Electrical Safety Toolbox Talk

COMPANY

JOB / SITE

DATE

TIME

PRESENTER

#	Printed name	Signature	Company / trade
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			
8			
9			
10			
11			
12			
13			
14			
15			
16			
17			
18			

Skip the paper: run this talk and collect signatures on phones at crewsigned.com