Cable Touches High Power Line



A worker died of electrocution when a cable hanging from a crane touched a high voltage power line. He was helping to unload concrete pilings from a flatbed truck, and was guiding the pilings as they were being lifted by a crane. At that time the electrical connection was made from the power line to the chain to the victim.

The power line had not been de-energized, nor had insulating barriers been installed around the line to prevent contact.

Unintended contact with overhead power lines continues to be a common cause of occupational deaths. When objects such as construction materials, irrigation pipes and motorized heavy duty equipment touch power lines, the electricity is conducted to the ground, killing people on the way. Crews working around any power lines, whether high voltage transmission lines or ordinary household feeds, must make sure the power is turned off or safe distances are maintained.

Lack of information was the primary cause of this incident, according to investigators. They said underground workers and supervisors were not well-enough informed about the mineral content of the rock to be blasted. Listed as a secondary cause was improper procedure in seeking emergency refuge. Investigators recommended better communications between engineering and geology workers and underground workers about how to identify rock types. They also recommended training in emergency refuge procedures.

Gases produced by blasting can injure or kill. Mine workers carrying out blasting must be aware of ventilation systems and where the blast gases will go. Ventilation systems must be monitored regularly. Communication procedures must be followed to ensure the safety of all workers including technicians and contractors. Workers must be trained in the hazards of exposure to blast gases such as nitrogen oxides and sulfur dioxide.

While the hazards in mining may be different from those in your workplace, the recommendations are worth noting. You have to learn about any hazard you might be exposed to in using, handling, storing, disposing of or transporting any equipment or substance. And you need to know what to do to save yourself in an emergency.