Laborer Electrocuted by 7,200-Volt Overhead Power Line



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One laborer was electrocuted and two others were injured when a boom crane with an attached auger accidentally came into contact with a 7,200-volt overhead power line running above a materials storage yard. The victim was helping to guide an auger that was being loaded onto the truck by a crane mounted on that truck. The victim was holding on to the auger when the boom or the load line came into contact with the power line. This sent the electric current through the victim’s body. Two other workers assisting the victim were also shocked and knocked to the ground, though their injuries were not life-threatening. Although CPR (cardiopulmonary resuscitation) was immediately performed, the victim was unresponsive and was pronounced dead at the hospital.

This incident reinforces the concept that prior to working in a location near electrical power lines, there needs to be a jobsite hazard analysis to identify all hazards and to develop and implement methods to control these hazards. In cases where the electrical hazard cannot be eliminated, the construction workers need to work with the power company to mitigate the hazard, such as by de-energizing the power lines during the operation. In addition, all workers should be trained in safe procedures and methods that will help them recognize, as well as avoid or eliminate any hazards they find. Also, crane operators and workers who work near overhead power lines should be trained to avoid coming near or in contact with these lines.

Source: National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, Fatality Assessment and Control Evaluation (FACE) Program, Case Report 200501