Worker Grabs Energized Anchor

A 44-year-old inmate of a North Carolina state prison who was working as a laborer was electrocuted while performing contract work for a utility company.

The victim had been working with the utility crew as a laborer for about four months. His routine responsibilities included monitoring the boom sway during drilling.

All training was provided on the job by the municipality. The victim could not attend the regular safety training meetings because he had to return to prison; however, he was able to participate in the tailgate meetings held at the worksite each morning. It was reported that overhead power line safety was discussed on the morning of the incident.

The victim was helping install a utility pole anchor. Because of the angle of the hole the truck's boom began to sway and contacted an overhead power line. The victim grasped the anchor to stabilize it. As the boom truck operator called to the victim to stop he heard a "zapping" noise and saw the victim holding the anchor. Realizing that the victim was in contact with electricity, the operator moved the boom away from the power line and the victim fell to the ground. Emergency medical services arrived quickly, but the man was pronounced dead on arrival at the hospital.

Recommendations:
NIOSH investigators concluded that employers should:

- *conduct a jobsite survey to identify potential hazards*
- *de-energize overhead power lines where proximity is an issue*
- *use an observer to help operators maintain safe clearance*
- *develop a comprehensive safety program for all workers*

Source: National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, Fatality Assessment and Control Evaluation (FACE) Program, Case Report 200502