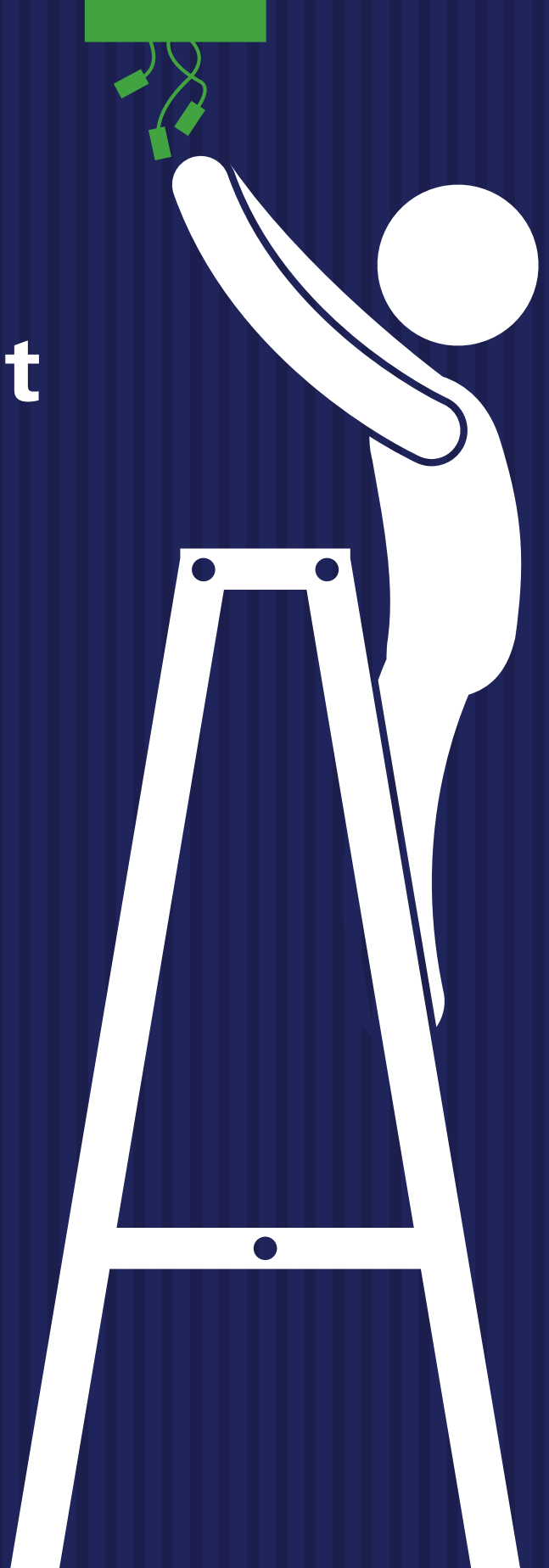


How to Prevent **Electrical** **Accidents** on the Job



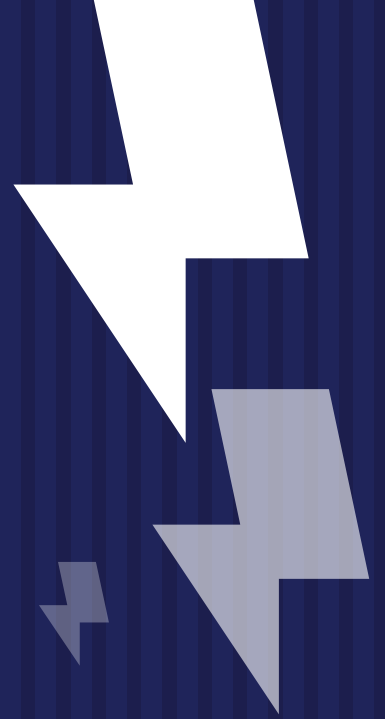
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HOW TO PREVENT ELECTRICAL ACCIDENTS ON THE JOB

Professionals who work with electricity daily are taught how to work safely around electricity, but many forgo safer practices for more expedient ones. Worse, many are encouraged to do so by their employer. With more than 4000 injuries and 300 deaths caused each year from electrical accidents, it's important for employers to encourage safe practices in the workplace. The following are several guidelines that should never be ignored.



Over Head Power Lines

When working around overhead power lines in any capacity, it's important to always be aware of your surroundings. Accidental contact with overhead power lines is relatively rare, but it does happen. If you're working with long pieces of conductive material, you want to make sure that it never comes in contact with the overhead power lines when working with the material vertically.

When working with overhead power lines directly, you should always de-energize and ground the lines. Wooden or fiberglass ladders should always be used when working around a utility pole, these are non-conductive materials that won't transfer an electrical shock if accidental contact is made with the lines or transformer.



Buried Power Lines

Buried power lines pose their own risk. It's important for contractors to know where power lines are buried and to avoid digging in those areas. When working with buried power lines, you should de-energize and ground the power lines as you would with overhead power lines. Many accidents occur when someone doesn't realize that they're digging in an area where power lines are buried and accidentally make contact with them with their shovel or bucket loader.

The most common injuries associated with power lines (both overhead and buried) are electrocution, burns, and falls (more common from overhead lines).



Extension Cords

Extension cords are often a factor in accidents around the workplace. The most common causes of extension cord related accidents are damaged cords and misuse. Many people will double up on extension cords, or use cords that don't meet the standard of the job they are doing. For most equipment on the jobsite, you should be using an extension cord that has three wires (three wired cords have three prongs on the plug) to ground the equipment safely. You shouldn't modify extension cords in any way or use multiple cords in place of a longer one when needed. Always dispose of frayed or damaged cords. Don't try to repair them or use them as is. Always remove extension cords from the outlet by pulling on the plug, not on the cord. For added safety, only buy extension cords that have an OSHA safety seal on the packaging.



Power Tools

Power tools also present a potential hazard on the worksite. When working with power tools, it's a good idea to plug them into an outlet with ground-fault circuit interrupters (GFCI). If there is no outlet equipped with GFCI (an outlet with a fuse cutoff built into it), then you can use an extension cord with a built in GFCI or use an adapter. A GFCI will cause the circuit to automatically shut down if it senses that electricity isn't flowing through the equipment as it should. You should visually inspect all tools before using them for signs of excessive wear, missing ground prongs, frayed cords, or cracked tool casings. For extra safety, it's recommended that you only use tools that are double-insulated. If you have been injured in an electrical accident on the jobsite, the first thing you should do is seek immediate medical attention to treat your injuries. Then you should contact a personal injury lawyer to review the facts of your case and discuss your legal options.



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For more information about what to do if you are injured on the job, please contact The Pottenger Law Firm at (816) 531-6006 or visit <http://www.pottengerlaw.com/> today for a free consultation.

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