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SAFETY COMMITTEE NEWS BULLETIN IN PARTNERSHIP WITH CONSTRUCTION SAFETY COUNCIL

POWERFORWARD DUPAGE SAFETY COMMITTEE MISSION

"To pursue a 'Safety Always' work environment for all working craftsmen and women through education and training"

OSHA Most Frequently Cited—Electrical Contractors

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According to OSHA (www.osha.gov), electrical contractors paid nearly one and a half million dollars ($1,428,094) in fines during a one year period, October 2013 through September 2014. This is double the amount of fines paid over that same period of time just two years ago (2011–2012). Enforcement is up! And fines are much more intense. The most frequently cited Federal OSHA standard to electrical contractors was related to general wiring methods and unauthorized exposure to hazardous voltage. Other notable violations issued were related to electrical safe work practices and procedures (NFPA 70E). Any violation where exposure to hazardous voltage exists could be considered serious; a "serious" violation is issued where conditions are such that there is a substantial probability that death or serious physical harm could result. Serious violations carry a maximum penalty of $7,000.

Most Frequently Cited OSHA Standard to Electrical Contractors... 29 CFR 1926.405(a)(2)(ii)(B)—General Requirements for Temporary Wiring

Branch circuits shall originate in a power outlet or panelboard. Conductors shall be run as multiconductor cord or cable assemblies or open conductors, or shall be run in raceways. All conductors shall be protected by overcurrent devices at their ampacity. Runs of open conductors shall be located where the conductors will not be subject to physical damage, and the conductors shall be fastened at intervals not exceeding 10 feet (3.05 m). No branch-circuit conductors shall be laid on the floor. Each branch circuit that supplies receptacles or fixed equipment shall contain a separate equipment grounding conductor if the branch circuit is run as open conductors.

The above referenced OSHA standard addresses a number of issues. However, through observation and discussion with compliance officers, I have discovered that more times than not, this standard is violated due to a wire being "subject to physical damage." Contractors who make sure that all wiring is secured at intervals not to exceed 10 feet that that no wire is even close to being considered "subject to damage" takes a little extra time and effort, but will be well worth it.

Another common OSHA standard, which is making a resurgence amount the most frequently cited is improper use of ladders.

29 CFR 1926.1053(b)(1)—Ladder Use

When portable ladders are used for access to an upper landing surface, the ladder side rails shall extend at least 3 feet (.9 m) above the upper landing surface to which the ladder is used to gain access; or, when such an extension is not possible because of the ladder's length, then the ladder shall be secured at its top to a rigid support that will not deflect, and a grasping device, such as a grabrail, shall be provided to assist employees in mounting and dismounting the ladder. In no case shall the extension be such that ladder deflection under a load would, by itself, cause the ladder to slip off its support.

To help contractors with their ladder safety programs, NIOSH, the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health has made available the Ladder Safety smart phone application (app). This new app uses visual and audio signals to make it easier for workers using extension ladders to check the angle the ladder is positioned at, as well as access useful tips for using extension ladders safely. Search "NIOSH Ladder Safety" in your app store for download.

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