

Alaska Chapter NECA

March 25, 2005

Alaska Chapter, NECA www.alaskaneca.org

Chapter Calendar

April 5	Anchorage JATC
April 12	Safety Committee
April 13	Board Meeting /Membership Meeting
April 22	Earth Day

Tool Box Talks

April 04, 2005	Exit Strategies
April 11, 2005	Fall Protection
April 18, 2005	Falling Objects/Hard Hats
April 25, 2005	Fire Evacuation



Crane hazards on the jobsite

Performing construction work around cranes can be dangerous for construction workers. Some of the hazards of working around cranes include:

- Being struck by hoisted material,
- Being crushed by the crane's superstructure, and
- Being electrocuted because the crane touched an overhead power line.

Being struck by hoisted material

Unfortunately, it is all too common for construction employees to be struck by material being moved by a crane. That's why OSHA has a regulation that says, "All employees shall be kept clear of loads about to be lifted and of suspended loads." When working around cranes keep be alert for the movement of materials and equipment that the crane is hoisting.

Also, if there is a spotter on the ground guiding the crane operator in load movement, he/she must use the appropriate hand signals to communicate with the crane operator. This should help

prevent you and your coworkers from being injured or killed by the material being moved.

Being crushed by the crane's superstructure

OSHA requires your employer to mark the boundaries of the danger area caused by the crane's swing radius and warn employees to stay out. One common and inexpensive way to do this is to use of caution tape to mark the swing radius. Doing so will also alert members of other construction trades working on your jobsite to the hazard.

As a general rule, whenever you see caution tape, be aware of surrounding danger, especially when the tape is in the vicinity of a crane.

Being electrocuted because the crane touched an overhead power line

When working around overhead power lines, not only is the crane operator in danger of getting an electric shock, workers on the ground are also in danger because the electric current can pass from the crane into their bodies. This is especially true if the workers are in contact with the crane.

Working around overhead power lines can be very dangerous. Avoid operating equipment within 10 feet of electrical distribution or transmission lines rated 50kV or less, unless:

- Lines have been deenergized and visually grounded; or
- Insulating barriers (which are not part of, or attached to, the equipment) are provided.

Your employer must designate a spotter to observe line clearance of the equipment and give timely warning for all operations where it is difficult for operators to maintain the desired clearance by visual means.

Hazards of tower work

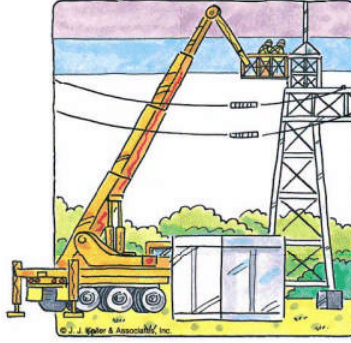
Tower work is inherently dangerous and is not a forgiving occupation. One lapse of attention can lead to disastrous results. Although any work performed at heights is dangerous, some tasks are more dangerous than others. Experience does not make the task less dangerous, but it does add to one's ability to look at the task and better determine what to expect.

A number of highly dangerous activities are performed on towers on a daily basis. Climbing is extremely dangerous, and it is at these times that you and your coworkers have less than perfect footing and are in the act of transition as a part of climbing. Using fall protection correctly will reduce the risk to an acceptable level, but it will not remove the risk.

Fall protection

Fall protection is dependent upon the condition of the climber, the equipment, and the availability of acceptable anchorage points.

Once the climber is at the work level, he may be attached to a location that will not be changed during most of the task. Just because you are not climbing, do not assume that the danger is over and you don't need to have fall protection properly attached to an acceptable anchorage point.



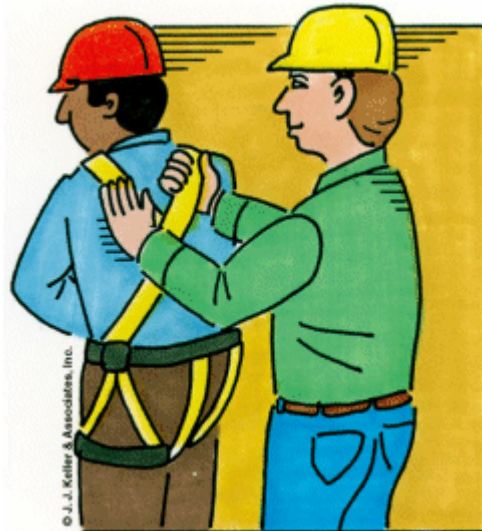
Material handling

Operations performed on the ground are generally less dangerous. Material handling means that equipment will probably be involved, if not initially, then later as the tower is assembled.

Material handling equipment such as forklifts and cranes may be employed to move assembled sections of the tower. During moving operations, qualified riggers should be used to handling the move. Although no one is qualified when they start, a new person should never be the only one involved in moving equipment and material. Only qualified and experienced operators should operate heavy equipment.

Operating heavy equipment

The experience needed to operate heavy equipment is gained over time. Typically, the operator will start with small hoists and equipment. Your company should have a qualification program that insures that the operator is experienced in a variety of lifts and moves before he or she is allowed to operate equipment alone.



Check your fall protection equipment

You trust your life to fall protection equipment, so taking time to inspect the equipment makes a lot of sense. Also, you don't have much choice: OSHA requires that fall protection equipment be inspected before each use for wear, damage, and other deterioration. If the equipment is defective, you must remove it from service.

The following are some of the common causes of wear, damage, and deterioration of fall protection equipment. (Always read and follow the manufacturer's inspection guidelines for detailed inspection requirements.)

Connectors and snaphooks

If you fall, the first component that will be stressed is the connector or snaphook. Make sure the snaphooks are operating properly. Carefully inspect all the metal hardware for damage or defects.

Excessive dirt

Utility work can be very dirty and fall protection gear can get filthy fast. All sorts of contaminants can come into contact with the harness or lanyard webbing. The webbing is made of fibers, and when these fibers get dirty they can weaken as the dirt abrades the fibers. Try to keep your fall protection gear as clean as possible.

Fading

The sun's rays can damage harness fibers. Since every harness is exposed to different amounts of UV rays, determining which ones could fail is difficult. If your harness is stiff and/or faded, you may want to have a competent person or the manufacturer inspect it to see if it's still providing the needed protection and is safe to use.

Cuts and tears

Inspect the webbing for tears, cuts, or holes. The webbing can be damaged or worn from constant contact with tools, equipment, or materials. Look at the edges of the webbing, but don't forget areas around snaphooks, buckles, or connectors.

Burns or areas that look eaten away

Fall protection equipment used in hazardous environments (chemical mixing, molten metal pouring, welding, and other hot work) needs special attention. Certain chemicals can eat into the fibers, destroying them and causing the webbing to fail. Webbing can be severely damaged in a very short period of time in an environment like this.

How often should you inspect the gear?

You may need to inspect your gear several times during the course of a shift if working in a hazardous location or with dangerous materials. The consequences of having your fall protection fail should be the driving force behind your equipment inspection process.



Know what to do after a traffic accident

Many utility workers spend a lot of time driving as part of their jobs. Whether it is a bucket truck, pick-up truck, or automobile, these workers have the potential to become involved in a traffic accident. When the unexpected happens a driver needs to know how to follow a set of procedures in order to safely and legally deal with the situation in a short period of time.

The following 7-step accident procedure can help you react after an accident.

1. Stop immediately

- Stay calm
- Pull off the road as far as possible

2. Prevent additional accidents

- Turn on your four way flashers immediately
- Make sure all accident victims are okay
- Set out emergency warning devices

3. Notify law enforcement

- Provide as much information as possible including:
 - The location of the accident
 - The number of people involved
 - The number of vehicles involved

4. Check for injuries

- Call for assistance

- If trained in first aid procedures, provide medical assistance

5. Document the accident

- Get names, license numbers, addresses, insurance companies, and other important information
- Draw simple diagrams of the accident scene
- Take pictures

6. Report to your company

- Time and location
- Estimate of injuries and damage
- Your location and phone number
- Names and addresses of everyone involved including insurance companies
- Make, model, and license numbers of all vehicles involved
- Names and law enforcement agencies of the investigating officers

7. Complete preliminary company accident report



When talking turns toxic

One way waste can be hazardous is by containing toxic materials. The word “toxic” brings to mind thoughts of industrial processes and nasty chemicals. The reality is that we work closely with these materials every day. One example: your cell phone.

In their circuitry, batteries, and liquid crystal displays, cell phones can contain toxics like arsenic, beryllium, cadmium, copper, and lead. Their plastic casings have also been treated with brominated flame retardants, another toxic material.

Cell phones are being discarded at a rate of more than 125 million phones each year, resulting in more than 65,000 tons of waste. To minimize the environmental impact of using a cell phone:

- Keep your phone longer.
- Charge your battery correctly.
- Reuse or recycle your phone.

Useful life

Cell phones are only used for an average of 18 months before being replaced—even though they can function for much, much longer.

Extend the life of your phone by taking care of it—protect it from damage by storing it in a case, avoiding dropping it, and keeping it out of extreme heat and cold and away from water and other liquids. Follow the manufacturer’s instructions for charging the batteries to extend their lives as long as possible.

Reuse

Donating or recycling cell phones when you no longer need them extends their useful lives and prevents them from ending up in the trash. Many organizations accept working cell phones and offer them to schools, community organizations, and individuals in need.

Take-back programs

Many cell phone manufacturers and service providers offer a “take-back” program. Under this system, manufacturers accept used cell phones and accessories and either recycle, re-manufacture, or dispose of them using systems designed to handle the specific types of waste cell phones produce.

Recycle

Many stores, manufacturers, and recycling centers accept cell phones for recycling. Some rechargeable batteries can also be recycled, and several retail stores and some communities collect them. When rechargeable batteries are recycled, the recovered materials can be used to make new batteries and stainless steel products.

Disposal

Always recycle, donate, or trade in your old cell phone. Phones that are thrown away waste energy and result in the loss of valuable resources.

Between 1999 and 2003, 2.5 million phones were collected to be recycled or reused, accounting for less than one percent of the millions of phones retired or discarded each year.