



## 012: Ceiling and Overhead Tray Work

### *Avoiding electrocution hazards*

Overhead areas frequently contain energized wiring. If you are doing a wire pull or running raceway, observe the location of existing wiring and adapt as necessary.

Look for obvious NEC violations in existing installations. For example, if you see SO cord supplying power to recessed fixtures, you can suspect the installer made other violations. Stop work and inform your foreman, immediately. There may be contract issues, in addition to your personal safety issues, to resolve before work can resume.

Use lockout/tagout procedures, even if you are just installing light fixtures.

Communicate clearly with others on the job. Tools for this purpose include end of day notes, labels on wiring, and conversations. Keep others, especially your foreman, informed of what you are doing.

### *Avoiding falling hazards*

Never stand on the top step of a ladder, or on the step below that one.

Use the right size ladder for the job. Using the wrong ladder “just for a minute” can mean a lifetime of paralysis. Tie-off extension ladders.

If working on scaffolding, check the inspection tag before use. Or, if you are qualified to erect scaffolding, inspect it before use.

Wear the proper fall restraints, if there is a place on which to tie off. In many cases, there may not be a suitable anchor within reach. You will then need to take a more aggressive approach in other fall protection methods.

You are going to drop things. That’s a given. Rope off the area if necessary. To reduce the added falling hazards of climbing up and down, bring extra items with you. At the least, have some extra connectors, mounting hardware, and screwdrivers.

Keep wires bundled and neat. A bird’s nest of wires can cause entanglement, entrapment, falling, hanging, and other undesirable consequences.

If someone on the ground wants to talk with you, don’t try to keep working while dealing with that distraction at the same time.

Look where you place your feet, not just ahead. In one factory, five people fell on five different occasions—through the same hole. None of them saw it, and the company refused to address the issue. One person broke his teeth and all four limbs in the fall.

Use a three-point contact when climbing and descending ladders—one hand and two feet or two hands and one foot.

### *Avoiding shoulder injuries*

Shoulder injuries are common on overhead work, because the work often places high demand on the stabilizer muscles of the shoulders—muscles that aren’t prepared for that load.

Many people think a rotator cuff injury or shoulder dislocation happens because of strain. That is not true. The cause is disproportionate shoulder development.

### *Discussion leader duties for this session:*

Read your company policy on overhead work, ladder safety, and fall prevention.

### *What this Safety Talk covers:*

How to avoid injuries that seem to “come with the turf” when doing ceiling or overhead tray work.

### *Discussion notes :*

