SafetyAlert FOR SUPERVISORS

Safety meeting blueprint

✔ Meeting Topic: Electrical safety
✔ Today's Date: _____
✔ Attendee Signatures:

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Because electricity is so commonplace, we might not think twice about safety when working around it. But that can be a big mistake. Here's why: According to OSHA, one worker every day is electrocuted while on the job.

That's why you can't take electrical safety for granted. For instance, you should always inspect an electrically powered tool before using it. Make sure the device is clean and dry and double-check that there's no oil residue.

Using tools properly

While inspecting the tool, confirm that the third prong isn't missing. If it is, electricity can go through your body instead of to the ground. Never use an device that doesn't have a third prong when it should.

Next, inspect the cord. Verify that there are no cuts, frays, or loose components. Then check that the power cord doesn't have any exposed wiring, frays, or taped ends.

When removing the cord, pull on the plug rather than on the cord.

It's also a good idea to test out electrical devices before use. For instance, if it's a power tool, plug it in.

Remember: A tool should be in the "off" position before it's connected to a power supply. If you notice a slight shock, sparks, or smoke while operating a tool, don't jury-rig it; instead, mark the tool out of service and find a replacement.

When working near moisture, use a Ground Fault Circuit Interrupter (GFCI), which monitors the amount of electricity in a circuit and, if there's an interruption of current or leakage, shuts off the power before an electrical shock can occur.

(In our operation, when might we be required to work with electricity near areas of moisture?)

Extension cord safety

Don't forget that extension cords must be used only temporarily; they aren't designed to continuously handle the electrical capacity of heavy-duty equipment. An overloaded extension cord can cause a short circuit, which can result in a fire or an electrical shock.

Avoid using extension cords in areas where there are a lot people because there's a chance someone could trip over the cord or wear down the insulated wiring by stepping on it.

If worse comes to worse and you need to use an extension cord around people, tape the cord to the floor or hang it overhead.

Keep extension cords away from oil, water and heat, all of which can cause damage to the cord's insulation and result in an electrical shock.

Wear the correct gear

Wear rubber gloves and rubber-soled boots or shoes when working around electricity because rubber can prevent electrical current from passing through your body. It's also a good idea to wear a nonconductive hard hat and gloves. Also, put on nonconductive eye and face protection.

Thanks for your attention. And remember, let's stay safe out there!

(See next page for test)

SafetyAlert FOR SUPERVISORS

Safety meeting blueprint: Test your knowledge

Meeting Topic: Electrical safety

1. Extension cords should be used
a. As a substitute for fixed wiring
b. Whenever convenient
c. Temporarily
d. None of the above

2. If you notice a slight shock while you're operating a power tool, you should
a. Jury-rig the tool
b. Mark the tool out of service and find a replacement
c. Use the tool anyway
d. None of the above

3. What footwear should you choose when working around electricity?
a. Steel-toed boots or shoes
b. Rubber boots or shoes
c. Open-toed boots or shoes
d. None of the above

4. If the third prong of a plug is missing, electricity could go through your body instead of to the ground. True or False?

5. If you have to position an extension cord near people, you should
a. Hang it overhead
b. Run it as close to the work area as possible
c. Not worry about where the cord is placed because everyone will see it anyway
d. None of the above

6. To minimize the chances of suffering an electrical injury when working near moisture, use
a. A Ground Fault Circuit Interrupter
b. A three-pronged plug as long as the third prong is missing
c. A two-pronged plug
d. Any of the above

7. An electrical tool should be in the "on" position before it's connected to a power source. True or False?

8. Keep extension cords away from
a. Oil
b. Water
c. Heat
d. All of the above

9. While you're inspecting the cord on a power tool, verify there are no cuts, frays, or
a. Intact components
b. Insulated wiring
c. Loose components
d. None of the above

10. According to OSHA, about how many workers are electrocuted on the job every day?
a. None
b. One
c. Two
d. Three

11. When removing electrical cords, pull on the cord itself rather than on the plug. True or False?

12. If you see a missing third prong on the plug of an electrical tool, you should
a. Tape the third prong back
b. Use the device anyway
c. Not use the device
d. None of the above

Test your knowledge: The answers

1. c
2. b
3. b
4. True. That's why if you notice that the third prong on a plug is missing, you shouldn't use the equipment powered by the cord until the plug has been repaired or replaced.
5. a
6. a
7. False. A tool should be in the "off" position before it's connected.
8. d
9. c
10. b
11. False. When you're removing a cord, pull on the plug rather than on the cord, because you'll reduce the chances of damaging the cord.
12. c