



OH Schit...

Date: 12/27/2022	Region: Industrial- Kennewick, WA
Project: LWP Oberlin Project	Incident Title: Powerlines Land in Work Area

Summary

A week prior, a crane pick was performed on site that did not encroach on the powerline distance rules in the Apollo Procedure, however, the crane company asked for the utility owner to put softeners on the powerline anyway, as an extra precaution. The crane pick went without incident, but on 12/27/22 a combination of ice buildup on the softeners and wind gusts up to 50 mph, caused the 14Kv lines to touch and arc.

As a result, the powerline split into two landing directly in our work area, walk path, and job trailer. 100 ft. of unused boxcar tracks that ran through the middle of our work area was energized as well. No workers were injured; however, the incident did generate panic that could've resulted in injury or death. The utility company was immediately notified, and all personnel were kept away from the area until given the OK by the utility owner.

Picture



What Went Right?

- No Injuries resulted from the incident.
- Apollo followed all procedures for the crane pick and immediately after.
- Apollo Manager followed up with the onsite owner's manager to verify that the utility company had been notified that they softeners were no longer needed.

What Went Wrong?

- Weather (ice and wind) contributed to the factors that lead up to the powerline arc'ing.
- The softeners were not technically needed and was requested by the crane company as an extra precaution.
- Workers scattered in the panic and did not follow best practices for down power lines or possible live power that is uncontrolled.

Would of, Could of, Should of

- Electricity can spread outward through the ground in a circular shape from the point of contact. As you move away from the center, large differences in voltages can be created. The correct way to move in a possible energized area is always with small shuffles with your feet close together and in contact with the ground.
- If contact is made with an energized power line while you are in a vehicle, remain calm and do not get out unless the vehicle is on fire.
- Do not assume that a downed power line is safe simply because it is on the ground, or it is not sparking. Treat everything electrical as energized until tested and proven to be de-energized
- Periodically review what to do in the event of an emergency with your crew. As a supervisor, you may have covered it once, but be sure to include it with your onsite orientation, and periodically thereafter.