

Electrician Falls From Aluminum Ladder After Shock

Three workers, one licensed electrician and two apprentices, were rewiring a residential basement. They were using a 300 watt lightbulb, drawing power from a temporary connection to power wires on an outside pole.

The electrician attempted to reconnect the temporary service outside the house and instructed his co-workers to continue with their inside work. He then went to his vehicle for tools. While working alone, he climbed up an aluminum ladder under conditions of heavy rain. Standing on wet, rubber-backed pieces of carpet, he then cut a wire leading to the house from the pole. He was wearing street shoes, no gloves and his pliers were not insulated. He was not using any type of fall arrest equipment.

After cutting the wire, he received an electrical shock. When his apprentices noticed a loss of power, they came up from the basement immediately and heard his cries.

Fearful of touching the aluminum ladder, they unsuccessfully attempted to dislodge him from contact with the wires by kicking the ladder. They watched him let go of the wire and fall from the ladder to an asphalt walkway 20 feet below. He died from severe head and chest injuries.

The safety violations here were numerous, particularly with respect to the use of aluminum ladders around electricity, fall arrest devices, the buddy system, the use of proper gloves and safety footwear and other electrical safety measures.

Continued safety training for all employees, new or established can help prevent fatalities like this one.