Engineer Electrocuted With 550 Volts

A worker assigned to make repairs near an overhead hoist was cautioned to “be careful.” There were high voltage warning signs nearby. He was not told that the power supply to the overhead hoist was still on. The power had not been properly locked and tagged out.

The engineer apparently contacted the un-insulated electrical power source for the crane. The 550 volt shock knocked him from his aluminum ladder. He was treated with CPR (Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation) by an office worker and transported via ambulance to a nearby hospital. He died a week later from brain damage and complications from the electrical shock.

Several safety infractions were discovered during the investigation. The hoist had not been fully inspected for at least 20 years, so the missing electrical insulating cap had escaped the notice of both workers and management. Also, the employees were not aware of proper lockout procedures. They also didn’t know that using ladders over a certain height requires the use of safety belts, and metal ladders should never be used near electricity.

Another factor in the death of the engineer may have been the delay in receiving emergency first aid. The closest person who knew how to provide CPR was an office worker, not one of the immediate crew members.

Scheduled monthly safety inspections and a written electrical preventative maintenance program may have prevented this incident. First aid and CPR training are important for everyone.