Not a Big Deal Until It Is Fatality Report

Two workers on a scissors lift perform a “non-live” installation of wiring for fans that will later be connected, energized, and inspected by a licensed electrician. As they run conduit across the ceiling, they approach a partially exposed 480-volt electrical bus bar in a bus enclosure missing an end cap. One worker attempts to use a voltmeter to test the current; the voltmeter crosses two phases of the bus bar and explodes, setting fire to his clothing and causing burns to over 35 percent of his body. His co-worker manages to lower the lift, but his clothes catch fire too; both men pass out. The worker holding the voltmeter dies 14 days later.

The plant where the incident occurred was purchased by the company 18 months prior to the incident. It employs 170 permanent employees and 200-300 temporary employees, most from the Dominican Republic, who work during a four-month busy season. Little formal training is provided and no safety training other than what employees learn on the job. The victim was a 19-year-old Hispanic male, originally hired as a laborer-helper, who was being trained to work as a mechanic’s assistant. The employee had no training on electrical safety and was not trained to test circuits.

Overview Of Case Study

It’s clear how differing approaches to risk identification and assessment can lead to radically different results. An experience-based approach will not pick up on the risk involved in the case study because there is no prior history of a similar experience. A hazard-based approach, on the other hand, will give this situation significant risk priority because the workers were operating at a high elevation while exposed to high energy with low-level controls. But only the hazard-based approach combined with a focus on human factors and organizational deficiencies yields higher priority attention to the task because the workers exposed to the hazards were impacted by organizational factors that made matters worse… much worse.