



May 1, 2025

May Safety Tip

Electrical Safety

May is Electrical Safety month which serves as a good reminder that while electricity powers much of our work and life, it also poses serious hazards when not handled properly. Keep reading to learn how to stay safe while working with electricity.



Electricity is a powerful tool, but it can cause serious injuries including shocks, burns, falls, and even death if not handled properly. Exposure to electrical hazards can result in four primary types of injuries:

1. **Electrocution:** Death caused by electrical shock.
2. **Electrical Shock:** Occurs when the body becomes part of an electrical circuit, potentially causing burns, nerve damage, and other internal injuries.
3. **Burns:** Electrical burns, arc-blast burns (caused by current traveling through the air), and thermal contact burns (from ignition of an explosive mixture in the air).
4. **Falls:** High-voltage contact can cause violent muscular contractions, leading to falls that may result in serious injury or death.

Electrical Safety Reminders

When working with power tools, extension cords, or any energized systems, remember these important facts:

- Coming into contact with electrical current can cause shocks, burns, falls, and even fatal injuries.
- Only 1/10 of an amp of electricity, for just 2 seconds, is enough to be deadly.
- Assume all conductors are energized and dangerous until tested otherwise.
- Do not overload circuits, and always use appropriate connectors and plugs.
- Keep tools and cords away from heat, oil, sharp edges, and sources of moisture.

Electrical Safety Best Practices

- **De-energize before working:** Shut off circuits and test to verify they are off before starting any work.
- **Lockout/Tagout:** Always use lockout and tagout procedures to prevent accidental re-energizing of circuits.
- **Inspect equipment:** Regularly inspect power cords, plugs, and tools for damage. Remove anything unsafe from service immediately.
- **Use proper PPE:** Always wear safety glasses and shoes/boots rated for electrical work (marked "EH").
- **Proper use of extension cords:** Only use cords with the correct amp rating for your tool. Never modify a three-prong plug or use a damaged cord.
- **GFCI checks:** Test Ground Fault Circuit Interrupters monthly using the "test" button.
- **General precautions:** Remove metal jewelry, avoid spraying aerosols near electrical equipment, and never carry tools by their cords.

[More Tips to Avoid Electrical Shock](#)

Click the button above for more tips and best practices to stay safe when working with electricity.

For assistance establishing or reviewing electrical safety procedures in the workplace, WCMB is here to help. Send us an email at WCMB@mt.gov.

WORKERS' COMPENSATION MANAGEMENT BUREAU

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