

Safety Flash

Near Miss Incident

Date of Incident: July 3 and 5, 2024

The Incident – Live Wire Strikes

A GEM jobsite recently had two serious Near Miss incidents while performing demolition work. Each incident involved live wires being cut by our associates. One of the incidents involved a 480V line; the other incident involved control cabling for the plant's process. During the incident review, there were numerous points that were brought up as possible causes. The possible causes are listed below with course of action to eliminate this type of incident in the future.

First, take note of GEM's "Take 2" initiative. During new hire orientation all associates are given a "Take 2" card as part of their hand-out materials. On the card is the following quote from Steve Johnson, President of GEM Inc.:

"As a GEM associate, you have the responsibility and authority to STOP WORK IMMEDIATELY if you become aware of an unsafe act or condition that could place anyone in danger, or if you are not confident in the work plan."

This gives anyone on the jobsite the AUTHORITY to stop work if they become wary of the work plan, without worrying about any consequence that could come from it; anyone from a first day apprentice to a seasoned journeyman or an office person. Nothing that GEM does is worth an associate getting hurt. If ever in doubt, don't perform the work until your doubts/questions are answered.

The Causes

- Both incidents involved not verifying the lines being cut were de-energized.
- STAC cards were filled out at the start of the shift but verifying the lines were de-energized was not noted on the STAC cards.
- Inconsistent use of verification measures by the demolition team. (Sometimes used, sometimes not at all.)
- First year apprentices were left with little instruction on the task other than verbal communication to demolish the area.

Action Plan

- Project Manager and General Foreman to create a DEMOLITION Checklist that will require both GEM and Customer walk-down of area, signatures/initials verifying that all lines have been de-energized, some combination of both ends capped and air gapped, along with proper Lockout/Tagout methods, or lines being marked before allowing work to start on the demolition.
- Customer stated they would include this as a Lesson Learned in their site orientations, along with Rudolph Libbe Group providing this information to all associates new to the site as well.

- It was stressed by the customer as well as GEM management, that associates need to know they are free to stop work at any time if they become unsure of the task they are being asked to perform.
- Communicate this Lesson Learned to all Rudolph Libbe Group crews onsite and distribute company wide.

Keep Improving

Your health and safety are the most important part of every project. We need *your* help to eliminate unsafe behaviors and conditions. If you see a safer and better way to do a task, see your supervisor, or contact GEM Safety: Bill Cornett – 419-720-2728. To get personal protection equipment from the warehouse, call 419-720-2688.