

TANNER ELECTRIC

ACCIDENT

December 26, 2009

Investigated and Reported by
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IBEW Local 77 Accident Investigator

On Saturday December 26, 2009 an electrical contact occurred to a Tanner Electric Journeyman Lineman. This happened at 475th Ave SE and Middle Fork Road, North Bend Washington.

The crew consisted of 1 Journeyman Lineman, with 29 years experience and 1 temporary Groundman with 5 days experience (with no rescue procedure training).

At approximately 1:00 pm Saturday, the Lineman was called to work from Tanner Electric's call center. The call was for a no power on Middle Fork Road in North Bend. The Lineman, per their procedure, picked up a truck at the shop and drove out to patrol the line. He arrived at 475th Ave SE and Middle Fork Road where he saw that the primary wire was down and a tree was laying on the neutral wire. At this point, per the company's procedure, the Lineman called out the Groundman to give him an assist. (The Lineman believed that all other Linemen that worked at Tanner were unavailable for work).

While the Lineman was waiting for the Groundman to get to the job sight, he went back up line to a recloser to make sure it was open. He then opened a

cut out associated with the recloser so they would have a visual open. When the Groundman arrived, the Lineman gave him a tail board, as to the status of the recloser, open cut-out and the tree removal plan. The Lineman then went up in the air to test and ground. The Lineman placed a ground on the source side primary wire that was still in the air. In the process he also saw that the underground primary riser on the pole they were working at. The cutout door to the riser was out of the cutout and nailed to the pole. The high side jumper was curled back and there was no signage, as far as the status of the riser, i.e. underground feeds over head or alternate feed. So the Lineman did not test this riser or ground it. The Lineman stated that he was worried about the source side of the wire, which was still up, might come down at any time and hit one of the cars that were driving by. There was no traffic control set up on this two lane road. So the Lineman cut off the source side wire in a grip. He then proceeded to clear away the tree from the neutral and street. At this time he brought the fallen wire up by hand to the primary position and cut it off in some blocks and pulled it up to sag. (There was no ground applied to

the downed wire and neither the Groundman nor the Lineman used rubber gloves when handling the downed wire). The Lineman then put an automatic sleeve on the newly sagged wire and proceeded to add in about 6 feet #4 acsr which he had brought with him. As he pushed the wire into the sleeve, the tail of the wire came in contact with the primary pot head, which we now know was energized from the first vault out from this pole. The Groundman saw a flash and the Lineman fall to the bottom of the bucket. What was thought to be a couple of minutes the Lineman came to and brought himself to the ground. While he was descending he noticed that the Groundman was on the phone. The Groundman was calling his office so they would send an aid car over to their location, rather than calling 911 direct. The aid car then arrived and rendered first aid and transported the Lineman to Harborview Hospital. He stayed the night and was released the next day with burns to both hands. He is now back to work.

Recommendations:

- Proper personnel for work being performed in accordance with State law W.A.C. 45.
- Signs on poles or updated knowledge of circuitry and alternate feeds.
- Proper training for personnel on rescue techniques, pole tope rescue and how to call for help directly.
- Set up traffic control and have personnel to control traffic.
- Make sure that rules of safety procedures are given priority.

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