

KOOTENAI ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

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I.B.E.W. LOCAL 77

ACCIDENT REPORT

Tues., October 23, 2007

Investigated and Reported by
Rick Luiten and Gary Stephens
Local 77 Accident Investigators

On Tuesday, October 23, 2007 at approximately 10:40am, a fatal accident occurred to a Kootenai Electric Cooperative line crew. A 5th-step hot apprentice died from an electrical contact south of Coeur d'Alene, Idaho.

The crew consisted of a foreman, journeyman lineman, equipment operator and a 5th-step hot apprentice. The crew had been working on this project the past 2 months off and on.

The line crew was working pole change-outs; 3-phasing and reconductor an existing 7200 volt single-phase line.

On the day of the accident, the crew went to the north end of the job site. They had a tail board and installed an anchor plate. Next the crew moved to the south end of the job to set a pole. The OCR's for this portion of line had been put on non-reclose and hot line hold tag issued. The crew had another tail board and discussed framing and setting the pole. The pole was to be set next to a single phase dead end pole with two taps off of it, all vertical framing. Also an OCR and cut out assembly was on this existing structure. The operator moved the backhoe in position to dig the pole hole. The digger/derrick boom truck was positioned and set up. The boom truck was not grounded; cones were placed around the truck; fiberglass section of the boom was out. The 50 ft. pole was framed. The pole had a 9 ft. dead end arm on top and full length ground wire installed. The hole was dug with the backhoe. The hole size was 4 ft. wide, 6 ft. long and 7 ft. deep. The pole was picked and put in the pole claws, then swung into the pole hole. The journeyman lineman and the 5th-step hot apprentice were on the butt of the pole and were wearing rubber gloves. The pole was plumbed and the crew said that the pole top was over 2 ft. away from energized existing conductors. At this time the foreman left the job site to go back on line several poles to align top of new pole with new line, poles installed. The foreman called the crew and told them they needed to move the pole butt 1/2 pole to the east. The apprentice was to move the pole butt. He did not have on rubber gloves at this time. The operator was told to come up on the winch line. The pole butt would not move. The operator came up a little more on the winch line. The pole butt moved and the pole top came in contact with the energized line. It is unclear if the apprentice had slipped and fell forward causing him to fall into the pole hole. The operator then was told by journeyman lineman to swing the boom away from the line. The operator then moved the

boom away from the energized line. The OCR that was on non-reclose, did not open. The operator contacted 911 and the foreman to inform them they had an electrical contact. The foreman called Kootenai Electric dispatcher; they gave EMS exact location of accident. The foreman returned to the accident site. The foreman and the journeyman lineman removed the apprentice from the pole hole. They used a portable defibrillator and performed CPR on the apprentice until paramedics arrived.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Use of primary rubber gloves while moving pole butt.
- Use of line cover on energize conductors.
- Use of insulated pole cover used on pole.
- Pole ground wire not to be installed on pole while set in close proximity of energized conductors.
- Use of line truck grounding.