

**POTELCO**

**ACCIDENT**

**June 3, 2009**

Investigated and Reported by  
Dean Davis  
IBEW Local 77 Accident Investigator

On June 3, 2009 at approximately 11:45 AM, there was an electrical contact accident involving a Journeyman Lineman who is employed by Potelco, Inc. of Sumner, WA. The lineman was part of a four man crew doing pole replacement work in the city of Anacortes, WA. The exact location of the accident was 3916 "S" Avenue. The circuit involved was Anacortes 15, the line was on oneshot (hotline work switch) and was also behind 100 amp fuses and at the time of the accident neither device operated. The crew structure was three linemen and one 6<sup>th</sup> step apprentice.

On the day of the accident, the crew was going to change out a 45 foot 3 phase 3 way buck pole. At this pole, there were two neutrals that were tied together, one on arms high and one in the common position. The crew had their tailboard on the job and they decided to wreck the top neutral out to make more room for the new pole, but before this could be done, they needed to go two spans to the north and make a tie between the two neutrals at this pole.

The crew set up at the pole where accident occurred. The Journeyman and 6<sup>th</sup> step apprentice went up in the bucket to mack out neutrals (install jumper to tie them together). The lineman put a piece of #2 bare copper into a hot tap at which time he put the hot tap into a shotgun, while holding the other end of the copper jumper in his hand, he went to install it on the high neutral. Crew reports hearing arc, and then saw shotgun fall to the ground. Foreman yelled to lineman, asking if he was OK, but he did not respond. He was in the bottom of the bucket. Foreman called 911 to get aid on the way. While the Foreman was on the phone with 911, the hot apprentice brought the lineman in the bucket to the ground where the other lineman on the crew helped to get the injured lineman out of the bucket and started basic first aid. The crew should be commended on how well they performed rescue. The hot apprentice did his part in the rescue extremely well.

During the investigation, it was determined there was a voltage difference between the two different neutrals, as well as 2 amps of difference between them. It is believed when the lineman went to put the high side jumper on, his right elbow was touching the bottom neutral, resulting in burns on left hand and right elbow. The only burn marks were on the bottom neutral where the right elbow was touching and this is where the lineman's elbow made contact.

At the time of this report, the lineman is at home and making great steps in his recovery. He is expected to make full recovery.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

1. When jumpering neutral, have both ends in shotgun with personal protective equipment.
2. If must hold onto jumper, wear rubber gloves, use approved cover when needed.

Report Submitted by:

Dean Davis

Journeyman Lineman Card # D918425

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6/18/2009

