

Toolbox Talks 2

040: Unsafe Acts: Running Raceway

Discussion leader duties for this session:

Think about the various dangers possible with raceway work, from pinched fingers to strained necks, and what unsafe acts might result in those.

What this Safety Talk covers:

Most injuries occur not due to unsafe conditions, but due to unsafe acts. This Safety Talk addresses unsafe acts when doing raceway work.

Discussion notes:

Background

“Running pipe” and pulling wire are probably the two tasks electricians spend the most time doing. Raceway work presents many opportunities for unsafe acts to result in injury. This is especially true when raceway is run overhead, so we’ll focus on that kind of work.

Some unsafe acts in raceway work

- Standing too high on a step ladder. Never stand on the top rung. If you can’t reach, get a taller ladder.
- Leaning off the ladder to reach. Rather than lean to one side, move the ladder.
- Carrying tools and raceway up a ladder. Use ropes or other devices to lift things.
- Using power benders without inspecting them first. Inspect bending shoes and other mechanical parts of this equipment at the start of each shift.
- Stringing power cords in walkways, allowing them to sit in water, or draping them over running machinery. Follow power cord safety practices, and consider using battery-powered tools where practical.
- Working over energized panels without providing barriers. You could easily drop a nut, screw, bracket, or tool into a ventilation opening. Place a barrier over each panel to prevent this, without blocking the vent itself.
- Working over energized production equipment without providing barriers. A dropped nut could be spun back at you by a motor, for example.
- Working over dangerous processes without proper protection. It’s unlikely you will fall off a ladder, if you follow basic ladder safety. So, it might not seem necessary to protect yourself from falling into a grinder or acid vat—still, do you want to take the chance? Also, there may be respiratory issues to consider—what fumes or particles might you breathe? Could there be slipping hazards due to process emissions, such as lubricating oil or cutting oil if you are working near presses?
- Lifting too much. Lifting a piece of 4-inch rigid isn’t a big deal—until you have done it all day. The shoulder is a complex joint, and it is subject to injuries from overuse. Know your limits and let your foreman know if you are becoming too fatigued to safely to do the work. Even a couple of hours on a different task is helpful.
- Inadequately roping off the area. Rope off the area in which you’ll be working. This will prevent traffic near your ladders. In addition to protecting people from drop injuries, it protects your ladders from collisions with passersby.

Review and discussion

1. When and why should you inspect power bending equipment?
2. If you have an electric bender and you suspect pipefitters might have

10. If you have to run raceway over a major traffic area in a building, what are some things you can do to minimize your interference with operations? *[Note to presenter: Skimping on the roping off is not an option. But options do include such things as doing the work on a backshift, creating a temporary detour route, and building a temporary protective structure.]*

Participant's Signature and Date

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