

Abstract of a Mishap

Accident Type: *Equipment Handling*
Injury: *Partial Amputation of Fingertips*
Type of Work: *Underground Wire Pulling*
Equipment: *Line Truck with Winch*

DESCRIPTION OF THE MISHAP:

Three workers were pulling high voltage electrical wire through a new duct bank using a winch from a line truck. The injured worker was an electrician with 15 years experience who was the crew leader for the cable pulling operation. His gloved hand was on the pulling cable when he instructed the winch operator, located next to him, to release tension on the cable. His intention was to pull the slacked cable back to ensure the worker in the manhole was not struck in the face by the slacked cable. However, the operator incorrectly pushed the lever and retracted the cable causing the hand of the injured to be drawn into a pinch point between the pulley and the cable. The crew leader sustained injuries severing the tips of his index and pinky fingers, and required surgery to repair ligament damage and the insertion of pins in the middle and ring fingers.

DIRECT CAUSE:

- ◆ The incident was caused by the injured improperly placing his gloved hand on the cable while it was in motion.

INDIRECT CAUSE:

- ◆ The cable was incorrectly tightened causing retraction of the cable.
- ◆ Operator was not adequately familiar with the winch controls.
- ◆ Lack of a pulley cover at the pinch point (point of injury).



ROOT CAUSE:

- ◆ Crew leader & winch operator had become complacent towards the safe operation of the equipment. Subcontractor failed to ensure proper operations by the workers performing the construction activity.

LESSONS LEARNED:

- ◆ Effective safety performance can only take place with proper attention to all safety measures by every worker on site.
- ◆ Pinch points should be assessed on all pieces of equipment to determine if the risk can be mitigated. AHA was updated to address this hazard for cable pulling operations.
- ◆ Workers must be properly trained in the operation of the specific piece of equipment they are tasked to use. Injuries are easily prevented with proper equipment usage.

Your Safety Contact for Questions (757) 322-8424