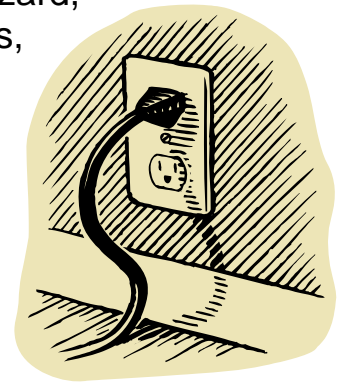# Eliminate Top Safety Threats to Prevent Electrical Injuries

Electricity has long been recognized as a serious workplace hazard, exposing employees to electric shock, electrocution, burns, fires, and explosions. In 1999, for example, 278 workers died from electrocutions at work, accounting for almost 5 percent of all on-the-job fatalities that year, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

What makes these statistics more tragic is that most of these fatalities could have been easily avoided. Taking steps to eliminate the top electrical safety threats in and around the workplace may prevent numerous injuries and deaths that needlessly occur each year.

- Most electrical accidents result from one of the following three factors:
  - unsafe equipment or installation,
  - unsafe environment, or
  - unsafe work practices.

Protection Against Electrical Hazards

Electrical accidents are largely preventable through safe work practices. Examples of these practices include the following:

- De-energizing electric equipment before inspection or repair,

- keeping electric tools properly maintained,

- Exercising caution when working near energized lines, and

- Using appropriate protective equipment.

- Make certain that all appliances and equipment are approved by an independent testing laboratory, such as Underwriters Laboratories (UL)

- Use appliances and equipment according to the manufacturer's instructions.

- Replace damaged electrical equipment or have it repaired at an authorized repair center. Replace frayed cords, broken plugs or cracks that could cause hazards; cut and throw out damaged cords.