

Line of Fire Safety Talk

The term “line of fire” is very common when talking about the hazards of a work task. Depending on the work being completed, there may be many different lines of fire or there could be very few. It is important to understand the “line of fire” and how to avoid being in it to prevent injuries.

What is the “Line of Fire”?

A simple definition of “line of fire” is being in harm’s way. Line of fire injuries occur when the path of a moving object or the release of hazardous substances intersects with an individual’s body.

There are many specific examples of hazards for each of these categories. A few quick examples for each category:

- **Caught-in or between-** A construction worker is standing between a wall and a scissor lift. When the lift moves the machine pins the worker against the wall. Another example would be a worker placing his hand too close to a rotating gear and gets it pulled into the gear.
- **Struck-by-** A pedestrian struck-by a moving vehicle or an object falling from a higher level striking a worker below are examples of struck-by incidents.
- **Released energy-** An object or tool under pressure that is being removed or a projectile shooting out of a malfunctioning equipment are examples of released energy

Avoiding Line of Fire Incidents

The best way to avoid the mentioned incident types is to eliminate the related hazards whenever possible. By eliminating the hazards there is no chance that you or anyone else in the work area can be injured by that hazard.

Here are some tips that could protect you from line of fire incidents.

- Always be aware of any body part that can be exposed to a line of fire, take care of your eyes, hands, fingers, feet and if they are in a position where they can get caught make sure to reposition yourself when operating any equipment.
- Never pull tools or equipment toward your body or face. Instead, you should work the equipment away from your body.
- Since hazard identification is a key component of line of fire safety, a Task Hazard Analysis should always be performed to effectively identify all hazards prior to any work beginning.
- Anytime you're hoisting materials, make sure to barricade the area surrounding the hoisting zone.
- If someone is working around equipment, it is vital the operator knows where they are always.
- Workers should never attempt to work with or around equipment that has missing guard controls.
- Anytime equipment has been tagged out or locked, employees should never attempt to operate it. Employees should also never attempt to remove the tag or lock.
- Make sure to be cognizant of any and all-weather conditions that could possibly put someone in the line of fire. For example, if winds are severe and materials are not properly secured, it could place workers in the line of fire.