



Avoiding the Line of Fire

The term “Line of Fire” is often used when talking about the hazards of a work task. There may be many different lines of fire or there could be very few, depending on the work being completed. Understanding the “line of fire” and how to avoid it is important.

WHAT IS THE “LINE OF FIRE”?

Being in the “line of fire” often means to be in harm’s way. These injuries occur when your path intersects with that of a moving object or the release of hazardous substances.

There are many specific examples of hazards for each of these categories, such as:

Caught-in or between

A construction worker can get pinned standing between a wall and a scissor lift. When the lift moves, it traps the worker against the wall. Another example would be placing of a hand too close to a rotating gear and getting pulled in.

Struck-by

A few examples of “Struck Bys” are being hit by a moving vehicle or struck by a falling object from a higher level.

Released energy

Released energy can be a tool or object that is under pressure and is removed or a projectile ejected from malfunctioning equipment.

AVOIDING LINE OF FIRE INCIDENTS

The best way to avoid incidents like the ones mentioned before, is by eliminating the related hazards whenever possible. When you eliminate the hazard, you eliminate the “Line of Fire.” That way, no one can be injured by the hazard.

Here are some helpful tips that could help you avoid “Line of Fire” incidents:

- Always be aware of your limbs, and ensure they are not exposed to the line of fire. Take care of your eyes, hands, fingers, and feet so they are not in a line of fire where they can get caught, trapped, or sucked in.
- When pulling or pushing on a tool or piece of equipment, be aware of your surroundings. Examine the path of travel for your hand or arm if the tool slipped or broke loose.
- Always push tools away from your face or body. Pulling them towards you puts you in the line of fire if the tool were to slip.
- Always preform a Task Hazard Analysis. This will effectively identify any hazards before any work begins.
- When hoisting materials, be sure to barricade the hoist zone’s surrounding areas.
- When working around equipment, make sure the machine operator knows where they are located at all times.
- If machinery has missing guard controls, never attempt to work with or around it.
- Be sure to never attempt to operate equipment that has been tagged out or locked. Never remove the tag or lock.
- Bad weather conditions could put someone in the line of fire. Be aware of these weather conditions. For example, winds blowing debris in the line of fire.

Source: Weekly Toolbox Talk: Line of Fire Safety Talk | Marek. www.marekbros.com/newsroom/blog/weekly-toolbox-talk-line-fire-safety-talk. Accessed 28 Oct. 2022.

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