

Safety Bulletin



Line of Fire



To be in the line of fire is known as “being in harm’s way” as in being in a position where one can become injured. A line of fire hazard occurs when a moving object has a path that goes through an area occupied by a person or object.

In workplace safety, line of fire hazards refers to an any potential exposure to injury resulting from the release of energy, being caught in or between equipment, or being stuck by an object or piece of equipment. This type of hazard can occur in any setting and awareness to these hazards is imperative for the protection of workers.

3 CATEGORIES OF LINE OF FIRE INCIDENTS

There are three main categories of line-of-fire incidents: caught-in or between, struck-by, and released energy.

Caught-in or Between:

Caught-in or between incidents happen when someone is either caught in the equipment or between two pieces of equipment. **Incident example:** a construction worker is repairing a machine and their clothing gets caught in the gears because of lack of machine guarding or appropriate lock out/tag out procedures.

Struck-By:

Struck-by incidents occur when someone is hit by an object or piece of equipment. **Incident example:** a worker is using a power saw and the blade breaks; it could fly off and hit another worker nearby.

Released Energy:

Released energy incidents happen when energy is released, such as an electric shock, or pressurized systems. **Incident example:** a piece of machinery that has been overloaded or a pressure vessel that gets subjected to unsafe conditions (such as extreme heat) suddenly explodes.

Safety Bulletin



WHY LINE OF FIRE INCIDENTS OCCUR

Safety is a main priority, and we can never know when an incident could occur. This is why we need to remain diligent, especially when working with dangerous equipment. Some common reasons for line of fire incidents include, but are not limited to:

- Fatigue
- Rushing
- Frustration

CONTROLLING LINE OF FIRE INCIDENTS

The best way to avoid line of fire incidents is to understand the potential risks on job sites and duties.

Controls for line of fire incidents may require simple avoidance such as moving out of the way, while others require complex engineering efforts with barriers or location changes.

Some ways to avoid incidents and stay safe while working include:

- Complete a thorough Pre Job Hazard Assessment and identify potential Line of Fire hazards
- Secure objects such as scaffolds, poles, stacks, and spools using safety tethers.
- Always hold onto a handrail when climbing stairs.
- Follow proper Lock Out/Tag Out procedures so equipment is unlikely to power up while performing any repairs or maintenance. DO NOT only rely on an emergency brake.
- Never use your parts of your body to prevent damage from occurring. This had led to amputations after getting caught between two sets of moving objects.
- When dealing with electrical equipment, make sure the area is dry.
- If possible, always work with a signaller/spotter, especially when using heavy equipment.
- Always be aware of your surroundings and identify potential hazards.
- Wear the proper PPE, which can include gloves, safety glasses, and hearing protection.
- Stay alert and follow all safety procedures.
- If you see a potential hazard, report it to a supervisor/manager immediately.
- Complete daily safety inspections on equipment to avoid sudden mechanical failures
- If you are ever in doubt a situation, ask a supervisor or manager for clarification.