



Contact: Brett Brenner
703.841.3296

Protect Your Employees from Arc Flash

Arlington, VA –An arc flash can happen without warning and occurs much too fast for you to react. The heat released during an arc flash can reach as high as 35,000 degrees Fahrenheit—hotter than the surface of the sun. Large arc flashes can cause an explosion noise loud enough to cause hearing loss and injuries from being thrown back from the electrical explosion.

To better address this issue, the Electrical Safety Foundation International (ESFI) has teamed with NIOSH and the Centers for Disease Control to distribute *Arc Flash Awareness*, a DVD training course, available in both English and Spanish. The DVD includes basic information about arc flash awareness and contains the first hand accounts of three electrical workers who were severely injured in arc flash accidents.

Surprisingly, it has just been in recent years that the term “arc flash” has garnered much attention. Many companies have started to raise awareness about the problem. Some companies, however, do not think that arc flash is a serious concern because they have not yet had an arc flash incident.

An arc flash can result from the spontaneous failure of equipment during normal operation or from accidentally bridging two live electrical contacts with a conducting object, like a metal screwdriver or wrench. Other causes may include the improper use of electrical multimeters, poor housekeeping that allows the buildup of conductive dust, or severe corrosion that allows connections to break.

How large is the problem?

- According to CapSchell, Inc., a Chicago-based research and consulting firm that specializes in workplace injury prevention, there are five to 10 arc flash explosions every day in the United States.
- The final cost to employers and their insurers for a single, serious injury can approach \$10 million. (CapSchell)
- 2,000 workers are admitted annually to burn centers for extended injury treatments caused by arc flash, according to the U.S. Department of Labor.
- A recent study from the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) determined 17,101 injuries were caused by electric arc flash burns between 1992 through 2001.

With statistics like this, companies cannot afford to ignore electrical safety issues surrounding accidental electrocution from arc flash explosions.

For more information on Arc Flash or to order a copy of the *Arc Flash Awareness* DVD visit the ESFI Library on the ESFI's website, www.electrical-safety.org or call ESFI at 703-841-3229.
