

## **TOOLBOX TALK #17**

### **WORKER ELECTROCUTED BY POWER LINE**

A 47-year-old maintenance mechanic was assigned to take down 10 mobile light towers. One light tower was positioned underneath a 7620-volt power line that was about 25 feet above the ground. For an unknown reason, the victim extended the telescopic mast and raised the tower instead of lowering it. The tower contacted the power line, electrocuting the worker. The electric current ignited the diesel in the tower's fuel tank, resulting in an explosion and setting the light tower on fire. The fire department had to wait for the power company to turn off the electricity before fighting the fire. It then took about an hour to extinguish the fire. The victim was pronounced dead at the scene.

#### **To prevent future occurrences:**

- Employers should conduct a thorough jobsite survey to identify hazards before placing mobile light towers
- Employers should ensure that workers know the safety and health hazards, as well as control measures, specific to their jobs
- Employers should assign additional personnel to observe and maintain clearances when equipment is being operated or handled near power lines
- Agencies that manage road construction should require contractors to address overhead power line hazards in the nighttime lighting plan and train their field representatives on identifying high-hazard working conditions
- Manufacturers should provide clear and specific instructions in operating manuals on how to raise and lower a light tower.

