Getting a grip on electrical safety for your plant may seem like a tough task. A wide range of regulations shape electrical safety while risk assessments, training, qualified personnel, and documentation have become priorities.

Know the Rules and Regulations
Government agencies and independent organizations work together to create and update electrical safety standards and regulations. Employers and employees have responsibility for knowing and following OSHA standards and requirements that employers document electrical safety programs that address existing hazards. A decision to ignore or violate the standards can result in citations, fines, or shutdown of an operation. Assuring compliance with these standards establishes a safe workplace and empowers your team to work confidently.

Become Proactive with Your Risk Assessment
The 2015 update for NFPA 70E focuses on evaluating electrical risk. The updated standard specifies risk assessment and having a complete view of the workplace covering installation, engineering controls, and everyday work practices. The NFPA now recommends that all plant employees be aware of electrical shock, arc flash, and arc blast hazards.

OSHA defines common electrical shock hazards as:
- Inadequate wiring
- Exposed electrical wiring or parts
- Ungrounded electrical systems or tools

• Overloaded tools
• Damaged power tools or equipment
• Wet conditions
• Wrong PPE or tools
Best practices for your risk assessment team should include:
1) Identifying hazards
2) Identifying who could become harmed
3) Evaluating the risks
4) Identifying control measures
5) Documenting the risk assessment
6) Implementing the control measures
7) Systematically reviewing and updating the risk assessment

Build a Risk Profile for Your Plant
You can use a risk profile to consider the probabilities and impact of identified risks. Many firms use variations of the sample risk profile to build employee awareness and to highlight the areas that require immediate attention for risk reduction. This sample risk profile considers the probability of accident types; other risk profiles may pinpoint the probability of serious accidents caused by various hazards.

Dealing with Change
New technologies and processes have changed how we view and implement electrical safety programs; updates to safety standards and regulations assist us with reducing risk for our employees and our business.

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