

# VOLTS NEWSLETTER

Valuing Our Lives Through Safety

February 2022, Volume 99

Casey Draper, Facilitator

Amy White, Editor

## Upcoming Outage Activities—Casey Draper

While many preparations for this year's spring outage are being finalized, the VOLTS Committee is hard at work making some preparations to contribute to the outage's overall success. Watch for VOLTS Safety Blitz activities, weekly raffles, and the Outage SIA awards.

The VOLTS Committee is excited to work alongside IPSC employees and its contractors performing the various tasks required to continue keeping our facility capable of

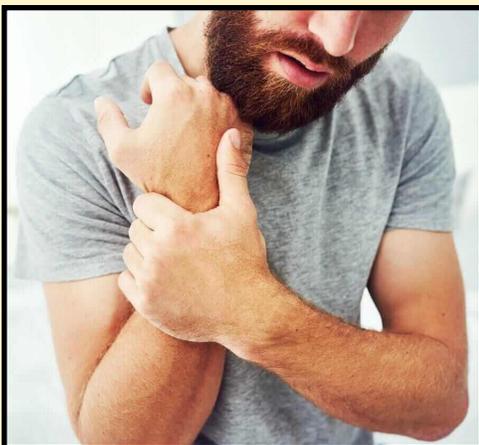
providing maximum electrical generation when needed. While the workload can be daunting, with the execution of a strategic plan from all crafts involved, we can safely bring down, repair, and restore the critical components needed to successfully come back online. Please look for opportunities throughout the outage to contribute to your coworkers' safety and IPSC's safety culture while participating in the VOLTS process.

## Safeguarding Against Cumulative Trauma—Casey Draper

When we think of the effects of a work-related injury, we often envision a single, traumatic accident that results in major damage and significant injury or fatality to the victim. While these single, isolated events do occur, there are injuries that are the results of an accumulation of smaller, seemingly harmless actions. These actions—over a long period of time—can cause injuries that are an incredible nuisance for employees.

During last year's outage, there were close to 170,000 hours worked by IPSC employees. When working that many hours in so short a time, it's easy to see how certain tasks can begin to cause strain and discomfort to a person's body. These tasks can be relatively harmless but uncomfortable, if the exposure is short-term. However, over a long period of time, they can become Cumulative Trauma Disorders (CTD). CTDs—also known as repetitive stress injuries—are found in every workplace and can be just as debilitating as an injury from a major workplace accident.

**What causes a CTD?** Cumulative trauma can be caused by working in a way that causes strain on one's wrists, arms, fingers, back, torso, or shoulder. Chances



are everyone has experienced one of these repetitive stress injuries at some point during their lifetime; whether related to work or not. Basically, a CTD is an injury developed over

time by placing repeated stress on part of the body. For example, **bad posture** may result in back pain.

Although standing or sitting with poor posture is fairly insignificant in

the moment, the stress it places on the structure of the body can result in an injury if continued over a long period of time. **Carpal Tunnel** is another CTD that many workers suffer from. Additionally, workers who are engaged in physical labor may experience **inflammatory injuries** such as tendonitis and bursitis. These injuries are often the result of muscle/tendon strain, repetitive movements, or excessive pressure on one spot on the body.

**Dealing with the problem.** Effectively identifying the root cause of CTDs does not fall on one single action. Rather, the solution is the result of changing a work habit. Cumulative trauma can be prevented by:

- Using the right tool for the right job.
- Changing the way your workplace is arranged.
- Adapting the job to the worker, instead of requiring the worker to adapt to the job.
- Taking the time to rest. The body needs time to recover from physical strain. Even a short rest of a few minutes can greatly reduce the chance of developing a repetitive stress injury.



## Safeguarding Against Cumulative Trauma—Casey Draper (cont.)

- Participating in proactive activities to improve physical health such as stretching and recovery efforts.
- Using an ergonomic assessment tool to evaluate the work activity such as:
  - ◇ Analyzing the workplace and how employees interact within the work environment.
  - ◇ Identifying all potential hazards that could lead to a CTD.
  - ◇ Looking for ways to work safely and comfortably without straining your wrists, arms, shoulders, torso, or back.
  - ◇ Ergonomic Assessment tool link [https://www.osha.gov/sites/default/files/2018-12/fy14\\_sh-26336-sh4\\_Ergonomic-Assessment-Checklist.pdf](https://www.osha.gov/sites/default/files/2018-12/fy14_sh-26336-sh4_Ergonomic-Assessment-Checklist.pdf)

One of the major contributing factors for the VOLTS process is to analyze the real-time data that is being collected by observers in the field. The observation data matched with incident reports, near misses, and other metrics are analyzed and trended to determine where to focus efforts and resources to provide the safest workplace possible. This information provides valuable insight on the day-to-day working conditions and identifies exposures that workers combat daily. The VOLTS Committee appreciates everyone's help in gathering the data to help improve the safety culture at IPSC.

*Cumulative Trauma.* National Safety Council, 1991.

## Announcement—Amy White



Welcome to T.J. Taylor, from the Heavy Equipment Shop, and Brandon Webb, a Converter Station Mechanic. They are the newest VOLTS Steering Committee Members. We look forward to working with them and improving the VOLTS process with the insight they bring to the Committee.



## VOLTS Data Report—Casey Draper

