

# VOLTS News

## Valuing Our Lives Through Safety

April 2023—Volume 113

### VOLTS Data Report for March

Total Observations:	421
IPSC Emp. Contact Rate:	1.31
Total Safe Behaviors:	3,862
Total At-Risk Behaviors:	23

#### Top 3 Safe Behaviors

- **Required PPE (370)**
- **Focus on Task (359)**
- **Eyes on Path (298)**

#### Top 3 At-Risk Exposures

- **Respiratory (6)**
- **Walk./Work. Surfaces (5)**
- **Required PPE (3)**

### VOLTS Steering Committee Members

**Casey Draper, Facilitator**

**Amy White, Secretary/Editor**

**Alan Wood**

**Brandon Webb**

**Bryan Chapman**

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## Limiting Workplace Distractions by Casey Draper

The risks associated with distracted driving have received increased attention in recent years. However, distractions and the risks they pose to workers are not limited to those found on the roadways or in the company parking lot. Distractions are one of the leading causes for on-the-job injuries and can lead to costly errors, dangerous mistakes, lost productivity, property damage, and fatalities. Losing focus and being distracted—even for a moment—can result in a simple mistake like a dropped tool, or a life-threatening event like a struck-by injury.

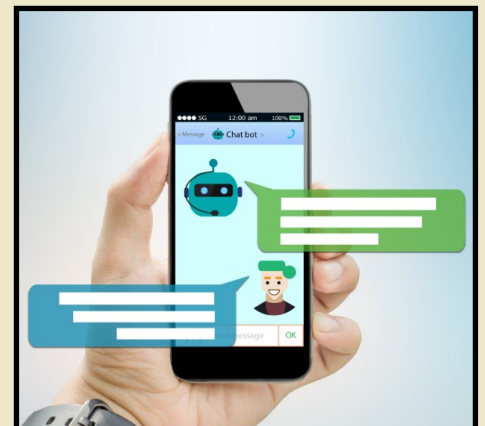
#### Struck-by Hazards

According to OSHA, a *struck-by incident* occurs when a worker comes into forcible contact with a flying, falling, swinging, or rolling object. Nearly 28 percent of SIF exposure in the utilities sector can be attributed to “Struck-by” incidents. (<https://www.osha.com/blog/fatal-four>, n.d.)

It is important to understand the risk that is created by exposure to hazards. When distractions happen, workers can become caught up in situations that cause them to immediately lose focus on the task at hand. Being mindful of distractions that may lead to inattentiveness is critical. If distractions aren’t combatted, situational awareness that is vital to staying safe on the job is lost.

Common distractions may include:

- ⇒ Multi-tasking, divided attention, and trying to do too many things at once
- ⇒ Interruptions
- ⇒ Rushing or a sense of urgency
- ⇒ Physical distractions from pain, hunger, or fatigue
- ⇒ Daydreaming
- ⇒ Looking down at your cell phone
- ⇒ Wearing headphones that block out important sound cues from the work environment



## Limiting Workplace Distractions by Casey Draper (cont.)



While there are an infinite number of distractions on the worksite, it is important to recognize when distractions are likely to happen and take the necessary steps to minimize them.

### **Take Distractions Seriously**

- Practice situational awareness throughout the workday and stay mindful of distractions that may lead to inattentiveness.
- Fight complacency and pay attention to what is going on all around. A great tool to recognize exposures is the “three-level technique” to help systematically break down the area above, below, and to your sides. Using this tool enables you to remain attentive and possibly avoid an incident.

- Understand the pace of your work environment, watch for unexpected events, and then adjust accordingly.
- Look for and acknowledge cues from your co-workers which may be verbal, physical, or emotional.
- When possible, do not interrupt or distract others when they are focusing and working.
- Follow all company policies regarding cell phone use.
- Turn off cell phone notifications if they are distracting during the workday.
- Do not take calls or return text messages when you are in the middle of a work task.
- Avoid using electronic devices when working near heavy equipment or machinery.

By understanding that distractions may never be eliminated completely from a workplace, it is possible to minimize the distractions that pose the greatest risk with the right steps. Recognize the warning signs and utilize breaks from work during the day to proactively lower the risk of injury due to distractions.

Please be mindful of those around you and remember that we Value Our Lives Through Safety by helping one another at work so that everyone returns home safely.

### **2023 Outage Safety in Action Award**

Watch for any IPSC employees who go “above and beyond” working safely, and use the following form to nominate someone for this award. Again, safety is defined as “*reducing exposure for self and others.*” Nominations will be accepted until **May 1, 2023**. Four people will be selected to receive this award.

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### **2023 Outage Safety in Action Award Nomination Form**

(Please detach form and submit it in a VOLTS observation drop box or give to a VOLTS Steering Committee member.)

Nominee Name \_\_\_\_\_

Please give three reasons or examples of how this person is a role model for working safely or helping others to work safely.

1. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

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