

VOLTS News

Valuing Our Lives Through Safety

July 2023—Volume 116

VOLTS Data Report for June

Total Observations:	318
IPSC Emp. Contact Rate:	1.0
Total Safe Behaviors:	2,759
Total At-Risk Behaviors:	15

Top 3 Safe Behaviors

- Required PPE (275)
- Focus on Task (263)
- Eyes on Path (228)

Top 3 At-Risk Exposures

- Walk./Work. Surfaces (5)
- Required PPE (3)
- Respiratory (2)

VOLTS Steering Committee Members

Casey Draper, Facilitator

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Safety is Personal by Dusty Smith

While working on lowering the Recovered Water Basin level, we had a submersible pump hooked up to the Unit 3 generator. There wasn't an on/off switch on the pump, so the only way to turn the pump on or off was to rack the breaker in or out. While checking to see if the pump was working, we found that the pump wasn't pumping water. We weren't sure if the pump was bound up or not, but the submersible pump had quit running. I went over and racked out the breaker to disconnect the power to the pump. Meanwhile my co-workers tried to make sure the pump wasn't stuck in the solids.

When signaled, I racked the breaker back in with my hand while looking over to my co-workers to verify that the pump was running. At that moment, it sounded like someone fired a gun near me, and suddenly there was a flash of fire and smoke coming out from the edges of the breaker door. I jumped away from the 480-volt breaker box that was still smoking and verified that I wasn't hurt or on fire. After a quick self-assessment, I realized that I hadn't received any major injuries and was able to power down the Unit 3 generator. My ears were ringing, but only my blue safe-grip gloves received some slight charring and blackness from the smoke. Lucky Day!

Solution to a hazard with SIF potential: To make this task safer for future use, the electricians added an on/off button switch to the submersible sump pump allowing employees to be farther away from the generator when starting or stopping the submersible pump.



SIFs and SIF Potential by Casey Draper

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (July 2020), in 1972 nonfatal injuries and illnesses among private industry workplaces occurred at a rate of 10.9 cases per 100 full-time equivalent workers. That number dropped to 2.8 cases per 100 full-time workers in 2018. While the U.S. rate of fatalities has also exhibited a decline, it has been much less dramatic. The fatal work-injury rate was 3.6 per 100,000 full-time workers in 2021. This 3.6 fatal occupational injury rate represents the highest annual rate since 2016. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS, 2022) a worker died every 101 minutes from a work-related injury in 2021. So, why have workplace injuries dramatically decreased, but workplace fatalities decreased at a much slower rate? This very question has many safety leaders and US-based corporations working together to understand the causes and correlations of Serious Injuries and Fatalities (SIF). See Chart 1.



What's your why?

Do an observation today!

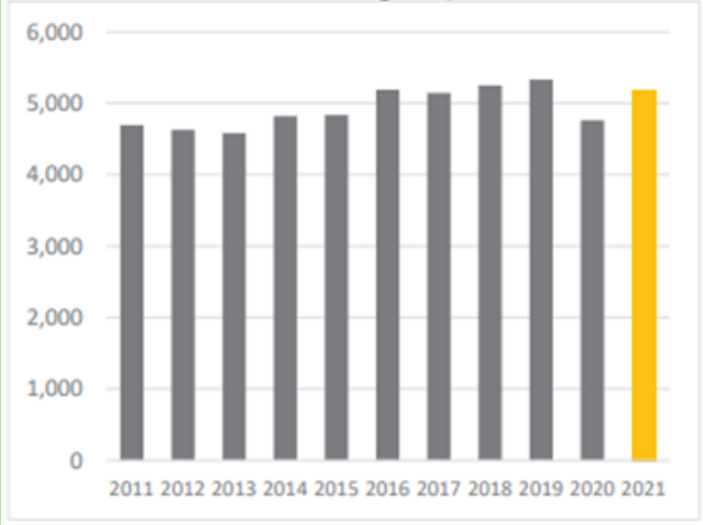
operations, and safety leaders—over the past five years, Potential SIFs have plateaued or increased while minor injuries have continuously declined. The pattern is seen in varying degrees at the site and national levels and calls some fundamental safety science assumptions into question. A recent study conducted by DEKRA North America identified two primary reasons the reduction in less serious injuries does not necessarily correspond with a reduction in SIFs:

1. The causes and correlations of SIFs are often different from those for less serious injuries.
2. The potential for serious injury is low for the majority (typically around 80 percent) of non-SIF injuries.

The issue of **potential** is important in addressing SIFs. Consider the activity of manual lifting. The most common injury resulting from manual lifting is a soft tissue injury (sprains and strains), and this exposure is unlikely to cause a fatality. On the other hand, falling from a height of 10 feet clearly has the potential to cause a fatality or life-altering injury, even though that isn't always the outcome of such a fall. See Chart 2.

To impact SIFs, a safety initiative must target the exposures that have SIF potential. Beginning this month, the VOLTS Steering Committee will be classifying potential-SIFs and comparing them with other metrics for exposure to offer visibility of the issue. Only then can real progress be made to reduce SIF and SIF-potential incidents because we **Value Our Lives Through Safety** by helping one another at work so that everyone returns home safely.

Chart 1. Number of fatal work injuries, 2011-21



IPSC is seeing similar trends in reducing workplace injuries. By developing a strong safety culture over the years and internalizing safety as one of our core values, we have seen an 80.8 percent decrease in total injuries from 2009 to 2022. However, national trends show that there is a high statistical probability of experiencing a workplace fatality. As we quickly approach the inevitable July 2025 decommission date, we want to remain diligent in preventing illness and injuries to our employees by combatting SIF and SIF-potential exposures vigorously.

Preventing Serious Injuries and Fatalities (SIFs)

During the past several months, we have extensively examined a startling fact that has caught the attention of maintenance,

Chart 2. IPSC Actual Injuries 2009-2022

