



Langley Research Center Safety Alert

SA-12-91

Date: August 26, 1991

TO: All Employees
FROM: 429/Head, Risk Management Branch, SSQRD
SUBJECT: Safety Release Regarding the Electrical Mishap in
Unitary Tunnel Substation, Facility 1290

On July 2, 1991, a Langley Research Center electrical technician in the Laboratory and Plant Electrical Section of OSD was injured in an industrial accident at Unitary Wind Tunnel Substation, Facility 1290. The technician was preparing to check a 22,000 volt nitrogen filled power cable for leaks and was instructing an apprentice and an engineering technician co-op in the procedures to use.

The technician moved his hand into close proximity of an energized electrical termination in the air switch compartment. Apparently, an arc initiated from this termination, jumped to his left hand and exited from his body at several places. The arc activated the protective relay for the involved cable and tripped a circuit breaker located in the Center's main power substation.

The importance of maintaining a safe distance when approaching any high voltage source cannot be overemphasized. Safe distances for approaching exposed energized circuits are defined in LHB 1710.6, "Electrical Safety", Paragraph II.C.4.

While most employees will not be exposed to substation equipment, the lesson regarding potential mishaps related to electrical shock is applicable to all of us. Training material for safety awareness is available. Contact this office at Ext. 47233 to arrange for the loan of video materials, briefings, etc.

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429/WCH