

Grant Co. PUD  
Hydro Mechanic Fall  
Accident Report  
August 22, 2017

Reported by  
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Accident Investigator  
Local 77

On Tuesday, August 22, 2017 at around 8:40 AM, an accident occurred involving a Grant County PUD Journeyman Hydro mechanic. The hydro mechanic was injured while doing a “weeps n sweeps” process at the Wanapum Dam draft tube.

On that day, the crew had a tailboard at the job and the task was to enter the draft tube to clean the “weep n seeps” and the apron, which are the sloped transitions of the draft tube. A safe work area for materials to be lowered down for the process was created. A four man crew of journeyman hydro mechanics and a three man crew of journeyman hydro electricians were all on the job site. A confined space permit was issued and the company’s “ERT” team was notified (ERT is an emergency response team). There was a designated person for the hole watch and two radios always in contact with each other while work was being performed. All personnel who were to go into the draft tube had proper PPE and safety harnesses on, along with proper footwear being worn.

Two hydro mechanics began to descend down the ladder into the draft tube, followed by one hydro electrician, whom was providing lighting for the hydro mechanics doing the work. When both hydro mechanics arrived at the bottom of the draft tube, hydro mechanics 1 and 2 began using a bristle scrub broom and bucket of water to clear a pathway through the algae and debris for a safe working area. While cleaning the sloped concrete transition area “apron”, hydro mechanic 1 was scrubbing the concrete draft floor and hydro mechanic 2 had a bucket of water using it to wet down the concrete to be scrubbed. Hydro mechanic 2 went to empty bucket of water to wash the floor down when stepped outside of the cleaned area and slipped, causing forward momentum to fall face first, hitting head, and being knocked unconscious. Hydro mechanic 1 and hydro electrician 1 noticed hydro mechanic 2 was not moving and immediately came to rescue. A 911 call was placed and the company’s ERT was dispatched as well. First Aid was admitted and hydro mechanic 2 was placed in a “stokes” backboard and hoisted by the torque retrieval device through the upstream draft tube door.

Helicopter was onsite and was taken to the nearest hospital.

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