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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE 4/20/2012

Sternco Engineers tackles arc flashes

YUMA, ARIZONA – Approximately 2,000 workers across the U.S. will be admitted to hospital burn units this year due to thermal burns from arc flash or arc blast accidents. Imagine an unsuspecting electrician opening an electrical panel only to discover that he has let loose a lethally dangerous explosion—light flashes so bright that it permanently damages eyes with heat that is 4 times the surface of the sun.

Electricity can cause two kinds of burns: electrical burns from direct contact with current and thermal from arc flashes and blasts.

An arc flash occurs when powerful, high-amperage current travels, or arc, through the air. The result is an instant release of tremendous amounts of energy.

Most of those killed or injured workers were unaware of and unprepared for the level of hazard they were facing. Because of the immensity of the risk, responsible employers recognize the need to facilitate electrical safety through performing arc flash hazard analysis on their electrical equipment.

Sternco Engineers, a local engineering firm, is now offering Yuma area businesses OSHA compliant Arc Flash hazard analysis and mitigation utilizing SKM Power Tools Software.

David Watson, the Principal Electrical Engineer with Sternco Engineers, Inc., traveled to Torrance, CA in February for a five day training session. The advanced course involved hands-on lab exercises based on real world projects.

OSHA and the National Electrical Code require that electrical equipment be labeled for incident energy, arc flash boundary hazards and required protective clothing. Sternco Engineers can assess existing electrical distribution system, do a risk assessment and provide these required labels. If you are experiencing electrical anomalies in your electrical system and need an evaluation, Sternco Engineers, Inc. can be reached at 928-782-3601.

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