SYMPOSIUM GRH 2023

Université de Sherbrooke

HR MANDATE

Presented by

fizz

Written by
Jérémy Pion - Conseiller prévention SST
Centre d'expertise Santé et Prévention de Québecor et ses filiales

Revised by
Mélodie Aumais, Academic Vice-President

Important note: The information mentioned in the following text is fictional to make the resolution of the academic case more interesting. Please note that Vidéotron and Québecor are in no way linked to the events mentioned below.*

Since its foundation in 1960, Videotron has been a leader in the telecommunications industry. Its founding president, André Chagnon, led the pioneering installation of the first cable TV network in North Montréal and part of Laval. Videotron was then called "Télécâble Vidéotron ltée" and had 66 subscribers.

Over the years, Vidéotron has enjoyed astonishing success in distributing its services. In 2000, Vidéotron became part of the Québecor family, following an acquisition carried out in the context of a series of public takeover bids.

Today, Videotron is a major player in the Canadian telecommunications market. As a fully-owned subsidiary of Québecor, it offers integrated cable TV solutions, interactive multimedia development, Internet access, telephony and wireless telephony. It currently employs around 6,500 people across Québec. Videotron takes great pride in providing quality, local service to Quebec citizens, and in its community involvement, collaborating on a number of professional and cultural initiatives.

Our mission :
- Our ambition: to connect people
- Our desire: A unique customer experience and innovative solutions
- Our guarantee: The best team at your service

Vision:
- A partner in your connected life

Our values :
- Bold: innovate to stand out
- Managers: take the initiative, trust each other every day
- Collaborators: unite to win
- Reflective: questioning to better evolve

In order to offer its services to Quebec citizens, Videotron builds and maintains its electrical network. To achieve this, several hundred technicians must work every day to ensure a reliable and efficient infrastructure.

Each technician receives initial training on the nature of the job, the tasks to be performed, and the associated risks and hazards. Work is carried out in a variety of circumstances (working at heights, in confined spaces, near power lines), all of which bring their own set of complexities to the job. Each work assignment needs to be carefully analyzed and planned to minimize hazards to workers and the public.

Despite the employer's efforts, an employee survey carried out 3 years ago indicated that employees felt they did not have the necessary means to perform their jobs efficiently and safely, and that senior management involvement was insufficient.

Description of the situation

A problematic situation arose in March 2022 when a newly-hired technician had to carry out a repair on the electrical network. An internal investigation was carried out to assess the cause, repercussions and consequences.

According to the information gathered, a problem seemed to have been present since a failure observed on August 25, 2021, the resolution of the problem having been delayed due to a lack of manpower.

Events sequence

On August 26, 2021, a network maintenance technician stated in his work report that our strand needed to be adjusted and that Hydro-Québec's intervention was necessary to carry out the work safely. No further information was found in relation to this item in the follow-ups related to this issue.

On March 23, 2022 at 7:00 a.m., a supervisor assigns an experienced team leader to investigate a request from a network maintenance technician for a Videotron wire stranded too low. The team leader arrives on site at 08:30 and photos without comment are e-mailed to the supervisor. The team leader calls the supervisor at 08:44 to discuss the situation. A technician is dispatched to carry out the work.

At 8:55 a.m. on March 23, 2022, a newly-hired technician is called in to carry out the repair. The team leader waits in his truck for the technician to arrive, and works on his computer. At this point, there has been no validation of the structures and electrical cables. The technician arrives on site and tells his team leader that he has carried out some analysis of the situation. No risk analysis or cable identification was carried out before work began. He simply notes the work to be done.

At around 9:30 a.m., the technician starts work and throws a yellow polypropylene rope from his platform over the top of the highest cable, which he incorrectly identifies as low-voltage, then ties it off with a slipknot and pulls up the neutral to release it from our wire strand. The boss looks at the technician without questioning the identification of the cables (low voltage, medium voltage, coil, neutral), he just says to be careful because this is electricity. The technician ties the neutral to the conductor in 6 places with the yellow rope.

The technician aboard the platform wears basic protective equipment (leather gloves, helmet, goggles, boots, harness). He takes a lunch break around 11:45 a.m.

At 12:00 p.m, the supervisor calls the technician to ask for a follow-up. The technician explains that he has reassembled the neutral with a multi-meter device in order to clear the street. Questioned during the investigation, the supervisor confirms that the explanations given by the technician on the sequence of events had not been clear. The supervisor mentions that he did not go to the scene, trusting his technician.

At 12:45 p.m., the technician and his boss return to the site and the technician starts work again. During the course of the work, at around 1:00-1:15 p.m., a loud BOOM is heard by both employees. The technician performed a visual validation, but was unable to identify the source of the noise.

Despite the situation, the technician completes the work without further checks and leaves the site around 3:00 pm. The team leader takes photos of the work performed and adds them to his report.

After the repair had been carried out, the supervisor opened the report and noticed inconsistencies with the information given by the technician over the phone at lunchtime. The supervisor believes that the technician's work involved a major electrical hazard. In fact, the ropes installed by the technician were attached to medium-voltage lines.

On March 24, 2022, the supervisor received a notice from Hydro-Québec confirming a potential high severity incident due to unsafe execution of the work. The supervisor questioned the team leader and the technician about the sequence of events, but was unable to obtain clear answers.

Questions & Mandate
Considering the description of the events and your knowledge of the company :

1 -Describe your analysis of the issues and risks inherent in the company.

2 - Build an action plan that will :

a) Improve the staffing and onboarding process in a context of labor shortage

b) Identify OHS shortcomings and the possible repercussions of inaction on the part of the company.

c) Propose innovative solutions, taking into account best OHS practices.

d) Define whether administrative actions should be implemented in terms of labor relations? If so, which ones and why.

Appendixes