An accident took place during a routine jobsite involving the installation of an 8-foot ground rod. An electric utility employee was given the task of driving the ground rod and the tool that had been used in the past was a tool that farmers use to drive steel fence posts. As the employee was driving the ground rod, the tool was extended above the ground rod end, and the employee's hand was accidently positioned over the ground rod. The downward force of the heavy tool pushed the employee's hand partially down the ground rod, impaling his hand between his thumb and fore finger. The extent of the injury was enough to where the ground rod was forced completely through that part of his hand.

Lessons Learned

Ground Rod Driver

An example of fence post driver - incorrect tool

Example of the correct type of tool to use.

The Lesson

This is an example of an accident caused by using the wrong tool for the job and an example of a job briefing that was not thorough.

Many tool manufacturers make equipment designed specifically to drive grounding rods into the ground. Visit J. Harlen’s website (www.jharlen.com) and look at their Ground Pounder®, or Hilti’s site (www.hilti.com) to review their Ground Rod Package. Milwaukee (www.milwaukeetool.com) has the SDS-Plus Ground Rod Driver set. Be aware that these tools are powered differently. They may require a small generator or an inverter for your truck, or they may be battery-operated. As with any product, always follow manufacturer’s directions for use and maintenance.

To see photos* of the injury, go to www.iamu.org > Services > Safety Services > Lessons Learned

*photos are graphic