Effects of Electrical Current* on the Body[3]

Current	Reaction
1 milliamp	Just a faint tingle.
5 milliamps	Slight shock felt. Disturbing, but not painful. Most people can "let go." However, strong involuntary movements can cause injuries.
6–25 milliamps (women)† **9–30 milliamps** (men)	Painful shock. Muscular control is lost. This is the range where "freezing currents" start. It may not be possible to "let go."
50–150 milliamps	Extremely painful shock, respiratory arrest (breathing stops), severe muscle contractions. Flexor muscles may cause holding on; extensor muscles may cause intense pushing away. Death is possible.
1,000–4,300 milliamps (1–4.3 amps)	Ventricular fibrillation (heart pumping action not rhythmic) occurs. Muscles contract; nerve damage occurs. Death is likely.
10,000 milliamps (10 amps)	Cardiac arrest and severe burns occur. Death is probable.
15,000 milliamps (15 amps)	Lowest overcurrent at which a typical fuse or circuit breaker opens a circuit!

*Effects are for voltages less than about 600 volts. Higher voltages also cause severe burns.
†Differences in muscle and fat content affect the severity of shock.

Sometimes high voltages lead to additional injuries. High voltages can cause violent muscular contractions. You may lose your balance and fall, which can cause injury or even death if you fall into machinery that can crush you. High voltages can also cause severe burns (as seen on pages 9 and 10).

High voltages cause additional injuries!

At 600 volts, the current through the body may be as great as 4 amps, causing damage to internal organs such as the heart. High voltages also produce burns. In addition, internal blood vessels may clot. Nerves in the area of the contact point may be damaged. Muscle contractions may cause bone fractures from either the contractions themselves or from falls.

Higher voltages can cause larger currents and more severe shocks.

A severe shock can cause much more damage to the body than is visible. A person may suffer internal bleeding and destruction of tissues, nerves, and muscles. Sometimes the hidden injuries caused by electrical shock result in a delayed death. Shock is often only the beginning of a chain of events. Even if the electrical current is too small to cause injury, your reaction to the shock may cause you to fall, resulting in bruises, broken bones, or even death.

Some injuries from electrical shock cannot be seen.

The length of time of the shock greatly affects the amount of injury. If the shock is short in duration, it may only be painful. A longer