SHARP START

January 29 — Bleeding Valve

Employee was cutting into a pipe that was shut off and locked out but the valve was bleeding by water. So, when he cut through water started running out of the kerf.	**Told my plant contact so they can shut the water off at another valve so we can finish cutting the pipe and cap it off.**

The line was shut off and locked out, so everything looked right. That visual confirmation is usually where people move on mentally the valve is closed, the lock is on, and the job feels ready. When the saw broke through and water started running out of the cut, it showed how easy it is to trust the setup without proving what's still in the line.

You locked it out tight, you did your part,
But a valve can still leak when it falls apart.
Drain it, vent it, check it twice,
Or that pipe may give you unwanted advice.

Once cutting begins, there's no pause to reassess, and the pipe quickly becomes the one in control.

This miss wasn't about skipping lockout. It was about assuming isolation instead of verifying zero energy.

Hazards

- Unexpected release of residual or stored energy
- Loss of tool control when conditions change mid-cut
- Sudden water discharge creating slip hazards
- Escalation if pressure increases or isolation worsens
- Exposure to unknown contents in the line
- False confidence from a locked but leaking valve

Stats

- **10–15% of lockout/tagout incidents involve residual or stored energy**
- Failure to verify zero energy is one of the **most common OSHA LOTO deficiencies**
- Line-breaking incidents frequently result in **secondary injuries** such as slips and tool contact
- Valve wear, debris, or seat damage are common mechanical causes of bleed-by

Words of Wisdom

- A lock stops movement, not pressure.
- If you didn't drain it, vent it, and check it — it's not dead.

Pause and Think

Residual energy is easy to miss because everything looks right at first. The valve is closed. The lock is on. But valves wear, seats fail, and debris keeps them from sealing completely. Until a line is drained, vented, and proven empty, energy is still present it's just waiting for an opening. Once the pipe is cut, the system will relieve through the kerf, and by then the conditions of the job have already changed.

- What tells you a line is truly dead?
- Where could trapped energy still be hiding on this system?
- What checks should be completed before the first cut is made?