
Overhead Power Lines Kill!!

A 21-year-old worker was electrocuted when coming into contact with an overhead power line. While the driver backed the tractor trailer up a rural residential drive at night in the dark, the worker climbed on top of the vehicle to move one of the overhead power lines that obstructed the truck's way. As the truck backed up, it appears that the worker had attempted to aid the overhead wire over the roof of the vehicle. While doing so, he came in contact with two 16,000 volt overhead lines, injuring him fatally.

The Electrical Safety Authority (ESA) continues to warn the public to use caution when working near overhead power lines. This fatality is not an isolated case. Ladders, antennas, flag poles, rolling scaffolds, boom trucks have contributed to a quarter of all the electrical fatalities that have occurred at home and workplace over the last decade.

Apply caution before starting work near any power line. The following steps should be followed:

1. Determine the location of the power line.
2. If possible, relocate the work so that it is not near the power line. When this is not practical, a safe work procedure should be followed which includes;
 - a) Determine the safe distance of approach (limit of approach). The limit of approach is not the same for all power lines. It depends on the voltage the line is carrying. The higher the voltage, the further the distance required. For example – the limit of approach for 250,000 Volt line is 6 meters. For other voltages and corresponding limit of approach, call the local utility for assistance.
 - b) Hire qualified persons to do any maintenance type work on or near overhead electrical lines, such as tree trimming or have the line de-energized by the local electrical utility or power supply authority.
 - c) Mark the safe distance or limit of approach. If the work is on the ground, cones or barriers can be used. A spotter will work as well. Take into consideration swing areas for tools, ladders etc. Keep far enough away so that if an object such as an antenna were to fall it would not be close enough to contact the power line.

Respect the power of electricity – ensure that you, your family and co-workers apply caution when working near electric power lines.