

## Technical Advisory: Overhead Powerline Covers (Non-utility workers and their employers)

**MYTH:** Orange cover-ups on powerlines will protect workers from electrical shock.

**FACT:** More than 67% of construction workers in Ontario believe this or aren't sure. This is a deadly misconception. Orange cover-ups on powerlines are used for identification purposes only and you should always remain a minimum of 3 metres away from overhead powerlines.

### Did You Know?

ESA works collaboratively with many safety partners. One of these partners is Infrastructure Health and Safety (IHSA). IHSA shares technical advisory notices. One important advisory relates to overhead powerline covers for non-utility workers and their employees. Source: (IHSA Technical Advisory W807)

Non-electrical utility contractors or homeowners may sometimes carry out work in the vicinity of energized powerlines. Such work may include, but is not limited to, the following activities:

- Tree pruning/forestry
- Building construction
- Various construction or maintenance activities such as roofing, siding, bricklaying, painting, or window installation or cleaning
- Hoisting of materials and/or equipment; crane or boom operations
- Scaffold installation
- Road works—excavation, operation of boom-type equipment, etc.
- Streetlighting maintenance or installation
- Telecommunication equipment installation or maintenance

If you or your equipment must be near but outside the minimum safe distances from overhead powerlines as shown in the table on Page 2, the electrical utility may be requested to install covers for the powerlines. Even if covers are installed, you must still remain outside the minimum safe distances from the powerlines.



These covers are installed only as visual indicators and are a reminder to maintain safe distances. They do not provide electrical isolation and cannot be relied upon for preventing electrical shock. To perform such work, should never work within the minimum safe distances from overhead powerlines.

Anyone that is not a 434A Powerline Technician, who is authorized by the electrical utility This applies even if powerline covers are installed. (See table listing safe distances below.) If the work requires getting closer to the powerlines than the minimum safe distance, you must contact the electrical utility for assistance to develop a safe work procedure. Depending on the type of work, a safe work procedure may include de-energizing the powerline, temporarily re-routing the power, or other means.

The table shows the minimum distances to maintain from powerlines based on their voltage. The distance for 750 volts and above is taken from the Construction Projects regulation (O. Reg. 213/91, s. 188(2)). For less than 750 volts, a recommendation is provided by the IHSA guideline Working near Overhead Electrical Powerlines & Equipment on Construction Projects (W802). A minimum distance of one metre (3.3 ft) is recommended when the voltage is less than 750 volts.

## LIMITS OF APPROACH\*

POWERLINE VOLTAGE	MINIMUM DISTANCE
750 or more volts, but no more than 150,000	3 m
More than 150,000 volts, but no more than 250,000 volts	4.5 m
More than 250,000	6 m

\*Ont.Reg.213/91 Construction Projects