

OVERHEAD POWER LINE CONTACT

Safety Topic V6-0959

Electrical, Heavy Equipment, Outdoors

Before operating equipment or starting any outdoor task, take a moment to scan the area for overhead lines. Power lines are not always easy to spot, and one moment of inattention can lead to a fatal mistake.

The best way to prevent tragedy is simple:

Look up before you lift, move, drive, or climb. Every time.

Keep your distance from overhead power lines.

- Carry ladders, poles, and long tools horizontally, never upright.
- Avoid parking or positioning equipment directly beneath or near power lines.
- Lower dump beds and booms completely before driving.
- Mark power line locations with flags and warning signs when working nearby.
- Keep equipment beyond the designated clearance limits at all times.

If you see a vehicle or equipment that has made contact with a power line:

- Do not approach it.
- Warn others to stay back at least 35 feet.
- Wet ground can carry electricity even farther so move away even further.
- Call 911 immediately and wait for trained professionals.

If you are inside a vehicle that has made contact with a power line:

- Stay inside and call 911. Warn others not to come near.
- But, if you see fire or smoke, you must know how to exit safely.
 1. Do not touch the ground and the vehicle at the same time.
 2. Jump from the vehicle with your feet together.
 3. Shuffle away without lifting your feet.

Discussion

How might weather conditions affect the danger of working near power lines?

What steps could a crew take to prevent overhead line contact on a new job site?