HAZARD ALERT

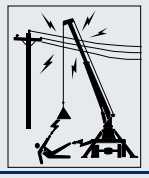
SCRAP-YARD WORKER ELECTROCUTED

A 50-year-old man employed by a recycling business was electrocuted while helping move some scrap metal which was piled beneath overhead electrical utility lines.

He was one of two men assisting the operator of a boom truck to remove a stack of sheet metal on one side of the road, and an old vehicle axle from the other. The men had completed loading the metal sheets on a flatbed trailer, and then swung the boom across the road to reach the axle, which lay below electrical utility lines.

One of the workers placed a chain around the axle, and grabbed the load hook at the end of the crane cable so he could connect the hook to the chain. As he pulled on the cable to make the connection, he inadvertently pulled it into the overhead electrical lines. He was electrocuted, and died immediately.

Recent accidents involving contact of equipment with overhead electrical wires have prompted both the Workplace Health, Safety and Compensation Commission (WHSCC) and NB Power to stress the importance of hazard awareness when working around electrical utilities.

Phase to Phase Voltage of Energized Electrical Utility Line or Utility Line Equipment		Minimum Distance
Up to 750 v		*900 mm*
More than 750 v to 100,000 v		*3.6 m*
More than 100,000 to 250,000 v		*5.2 m*
More than 250,000 to 345,000 v		*6.1 m*

The minimum distances apply to all objects, including scaffolds, hand tools, ladders, heavy equipment, etc. If in doubt, assume it is 750 volts or greater.

This warning isn't limited only to operators of boom trucks. The accident that claimed the life of the worker at the recycling plant was just one in a series of recent accidents involving members of the public and overhead power lines. The safety reminder is particularly appropriate for construction sites and logging operations where boom trucks, cranes, dump trucks and other elevating equipment are in use.

Recommended Preventive Action

With appropriate precautions and procedures, work carried out in proximity to electrical transmission or distribution lines need not become a threat to workers' safety. A major cause of accidents is failure to identify the extreme hazards associated with live electrical installations.

1. Contact the authority owning or operating the electrical utility line or utility line equipment to ensure that the line or equipment is (a) de-energized, or (b) adequately insulated or guarded before permitting any employees to start work. [Subsection 289(2) *Regulation 91-191*]
2. When an employee who is not a qualified person (see Section 286 *Regulation 91-191*) is about to start work that is liable to bring any person or object closer to an energized electrical line or utility line equipment, maintain the minimum distances specified in the following table. [Subsection 289(1) *Regulation 91-191*]
3. All workers are to be trained to recognize and avoid the hazards associated with their work. [Paragraph 9(2)(b) *Occupational Health and Safety Act*]

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