

18/04/2019

Fatality

Incident date:

2/04/2019

Event:

Contact with power lines

Location:

Riverview

Incident Overview

A 39 year old electricity network linesman was working on overhead power lines from a truck mounted elevating work platform, when he came into contact with live power lines. He received a serious electric shock and lost consciousness. He was lowered to the ground by other workers. They performed CPR on the linesman including the use of an Automated External Defibrillator (AED) until emergency services arrived. He was transported to hospital but later died as a result of the injuries sustained in the incident.



Image: Power pole being worked on where the incident occurred.

The investigation

SafeWork NSW Inspectors responded to the incident.

SafeWork NSW has commenced an investigation to determine the cause and circumstances of the incident.

Our [Prosecution Guidelines \(January 2018\)](#) outline our approach to prosecutions and Safe Work Australia's [National Compliance and Enforcement Policy](#) provides guidance on their approach to compliance. These documents set out factors that will be considered in determining the investigative approach and appropriate outcome.

Safety Information

Electricity network operators are reminded of their duty to identify hazards and manage risks to health and safety in accordance with the provisions of the [Work Health and Safety Act 2011](#) and [Work Health and Safety Regulation 2017](#). Businesses must also adhere to provisions of the [Electricity Supply Act 1995](#) and [Electricity Supply \(Safety and Network Management\) Regulation 2014](#).

In particular, electricity network operators, in managing electrical risks to health and safety, must:

- a) Eliminate the electrical risks to health and safety so far as is reasonably practicable by de-energising the electrical supply, and
- b) If a) is not reasonably practicable, then the risk must be minimised, but not limited to doing one or more of the following:
 - Substitute the hazardous work practice giving rise to the risk with something that gives rise to a lesser risk.
 - Isolating the hazard from any person exposed to it – this includes covering all secondary contact points within reach with temporary insulating covers and securing these covers so they can't be removed accidentally.
 - Implement engineering controls, including using an insulated elevating work platform and tools.

If a risk remains, then you must minimise the remaining risk, so far as is reasonably practicable, by implementing administrative controls. This includes maintaining safe separation between the workers and live conductors that are not being worked on, even if they have temporary insulating covers.

A safety observer trained in rescue and resuscitation must be on site during work on live electrical equipment including overhead power lines.

Suitable personal protective equipment (PPE) should be provided and used. This includes wearing low voltage insulating gloves and outer protective gloves on both hands. A detailed visual inspection and an air leak test must be conducted on the gloves before use.

Note

A combination of the controls set out in this IIR but not limited to, may be used to minimise risks, so far as is reasonably practicable, if a single control does not eliminate the risk.

The above risk control measures must be maintained and remain effective for the duration of the works. The risk control and treatment measures must also be reviewed and as necessary, revised to maintain, so far as reasonably practicable, a work environment that is without risks to health and safety.

Support for injured persons and family members affected by a serious workplace incident

Our Coordinator Family Liaison can provide information on counselling and other support to injured workers and to close family members when a relative has died or is seriously injured in the workplace. Contact us on 13 10 50 or contact@safework.nsw.gov.au

Visit www.coroners.justice.nsw.gov.au for information about the State Coroner.

Further information

- [Electricity Supply Act 1995](#)
- [Electricity Supply \(Safety and Network Management\) Regulation 2014.](#)

About this information release

We have issued this information to draw attention to the occurrence of a fatality in the electricity supply industry. Investigations are ongoing and further information may be published as it becomes available.

The information contained in this publication is based on knowledge and understanding at the time of writing. Users are reminded of the need to ensure any information upon which they rely is up to date and to check the currency of the information with the appropriate SafeWork NSW officer or the user's independent adviser. No conclusions should be drawn from the information in this publication about the cause of the incident or the culpability of any party.

All photographs were taken by SafeWork NSW.