

# TOOL BOX TALKS

## Overhead Power Line Safety

### General Safety

All construction workers should be aware of electrical hazards on the job site. When it comes to electrical safety, there is no room for carelessness or complacency. It seems as if ALL job sites have power lines running through them. Employees are using metal extension ladders, boom lifts, and scaffolds—all tools that can come into contact with overhead power lines. Review these safety tips, and discuss at your safety meetings.

### Tool Box Tips

#### OVERHEAD POWER LINE SAFETY BASICS

1. Never get closer than 10 feet to a power line!
2. Conduct initial and daily surveys of the job site and implement control measures and training to address hazards.
3. Don't operate equipment around overhead power lines unless you are authorized and trained to do so—Look up!
4. If an object (scaffolds, crane, etc.) must be moved in the area of overhead power lines, appoint a competent worker whose sole responsibility is to observe the clearance between the power lines and the object—Look up!
5. Warn others if the minimum distance is not maintained.
6. Never touch an overhead line if it is down or has fallen.
7. Never assume lines are dead.
8. When a machine is in contact with an overhead line, DO NOT allow anyone to come near or touch the machine.
9. Stay away from the machine and summon outside assistance.
10. Never touch a person who is in contact with a live power line.
11. Get certified in CPR, cardiopulmonary resuscitation.
12. When working near overhead power lines, the use of non-conductive wooden or fiberglass ladders is recommended.
13. Aluminum ladders and metal scaffolds or frames are conductors of electricity.
14. Avoid storing materials underneath or near overhead power lines.

#### CONTACT WITH VEHICLES

1. If you should be in a vehicle that is in contact with an overhead power line, DON'T LEAVE THE VEHICLE. As long as you stay inside and avoid touching metal on the vehicle, you may be able to avoid an electrical hazard.
2. If you need to get out to summon help or because of fire, jump out without touching any wires or the machine, keep your feet together, and hop to safety.
3. When mechanical equipment is being operated near overhead power lines, employees standing on the ground should not contact the equipment unless it is located so that the required clearance cannot be violated even at the maximum reach of the equipment.

#### TOOL SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS

1. Always use tools that work properly.
2. Tools must be inspected before use and, those found to be questionable, should be removed from service and properly tagged.
3. Tools and other equipment should be regularly maintained.
4. Inadequate maintenance can cause equipment to deteriorate, resulting in an unsafe condition.
5. Tools used to handle energized conductors must be designed and constructed to withstand the voltages and stresses to which they are exposed.
6. Use the personal protective equipment (PPE) appropriate for the job that is performed.
7. PPE may consist of rubber insulating gloves, hoods, sleeves, matting, blankets, etc.

*These advisory materials have been developed from national standards and sources believed to be reliable, however, no guarantee is made as to the sufficiency of the information contained in the material and Missouri Employers Mutual Insurance Company assumes no liability for its use. Advice about specific situations should be obtained from a safety professional.*

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