



## Use Caution around Power Lines

Power lines are everywhere. They are essential for industry, cities and towns, and for getting our work done. You'll find them in residential, commercial, and industrial areas, and on most every construction project. You must always be aware of where power lines are located around you and remember to maintain a safe distance to avoid serious injuries and fatalities.

Inattention blindness can be very dangerous around overhead power lines. Inattention blindness occurs when you are so involved in your work that you become "blind" to what is happening around you. You fail to notice hazards that are fully visible—such as dangerous power lines.

Electrocution is a leading cause of workplace deaths in the United States. If you take chances, forget safety precautions, or suffer from inattention blindness, you or someone you work with could die. You don't need to directly touch an overhead power line to suffer a fatal shock. Simply being too close can be enough for the energy to arc and kill you.

Before you start any task, plan ahead, look around, and determine if there are any power lines in your work area. Assume that all overhead power lines are energized, no matter what they look like. Use signs to mark areas with overhead power lines, especially if heavy equipment will be nearby. Consider assigning someone to monitor clearances and signal operators when equipment is close to power lines.

Never touch a power line. Touching a power line with any part of your body or any object such as ladders, tree trimmers, poles, rods, or heavy equipment can result in serious injury or death. When you carry long or tall items, keep them parallel to the ground to avoid contact with overhead power lines. Before you raise them, look up and check out the space. Always maintain a minimum of 10 feet from all power lines—no exceptions.

You have to be extremely careful anytime equipment, tag lines, or loads are in the danger zone. If any one of them touches or gets too close to an energized line, it will conduct electricity instantly. If you are too close—to the power line, equipment, tag line, or load—you could be burned or killed.

If you are an equipment operator and accidentally hit an overhead power line with your machine, stay in the cab. It is safer to stay in than to try to get out. Have someone call the power company immediately to shut off the power. If you can, move the machine away from the power line. If you can't move the machine, sit tight and try to stay calm.



Do not get out until the power has been turned off. Make sure other workers stay away from the machine and the wires.

Anyone who touches a victim who is still in contact with an electrical current can also receive a severe shock. Before providing first aid, isolate the power and call 911.

### **SAFETY REMINDER**

**Teach your kids that they should never play in or on electrical facilities like substations, transmission towers, transformers, and power lines.**