

spring 2010

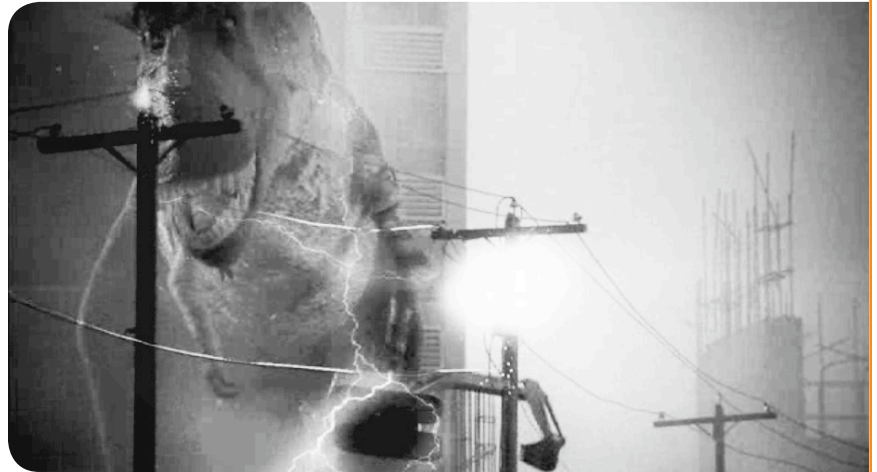
news lines

wherestheline.ca

Current news and views from
Alberta's Joint Utility Safety Team

WHERE'S THE LINE?

The operator lowered the boom of the excavator, scooping dirt from the trench. As he lifted the bucket, he spotted a power line in the trench making contact with its edge. Deciding to take a closer look, he made the life-threatening mistake of exiting the cab, swinging one foot down to the ground while touching the side of his equipment. There was nothing his co-workers could do but phone for help as they watched helplessly from outside the trench.



No One Is Invincible

"WHERE'S THE LINE?" recently launched a "monster" TV spot that shows how quickly power lines can become deadly – no matter how invincible you think you are. Equally deadly is complacency, which you can avoid by reminding yourself and co-workers with a safety presentation, downloadable at wherestheline.ca/education.html. Kick start the spring by always asking yourself, "WHERE'S THE LINE?"

THE SHOCKING TRUTH

Every day, three people in Alberta come into contact with an overhead or underground power line, risking serious injury or death because they didn't ask themselves, "WHERE'S THE LINE?"

DANGER LURKING BENEATH

Buried utility lines pose a deadly threat underground. Before commencing any excavation, all underground lines in the area must be located and marked. Call Alberta One Call at least two business days before the job at **1-800-242-3447** – every time. Be aware of lines that may be buried side-by-side or beneath one another. Additional overhead electrical equipment must also be identified when excavating, for example, utility pole bases and other equipment foundations must not be exposed.

Mechanical equipment and work must be kept at least one metre from marked locates. If you need to work closer, the line must then be hand-exposed or exposed in a non-destructive way that has been approved by the utility.

Once locates are marked, work in the area must commence within 14 days. If it doesn't, or locates are tampered with, call Alberta One Call again to have locates remarked.

Before Excavating:

- 1 Arrange to meet the electric utility representative on site to determine the safest means of excavation.
- 2 Mark the locations of all buried lines. Review the locate slips and ensure they remain on site at all times.
- 3 Be aware of overhead power lines and locate excavation spoil piles at least seven metres away.

Stay "7 Metres Safe"

Keep yourself and your equipment at least seven metres away from overhead power lines. If you must work closer, call your local electric utility company first.

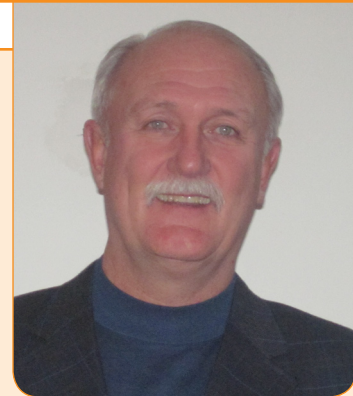
Before excavating, always call **Alberta One Call** (1-800-242-3447) to locate any underground power lines.

SEEDING SEASON DOESN'T HAVE TO MEAN HIGHER RISK

Risk of electrical incidents increases during this busy season

- Equipment over **4.15 metres** tall is considered over-height, and requires a permit from Alberta Infrastructure and Transportation. If your equipment or load is **5.3 metres** or higher, in addition to a permit, the local electric utility must be contacted at least 7 days in advance for safe transport on public roads or highways.
- Know the height of your equipment and all power lines on your farm. Call your local electric utility to determine this — never do it yourself. Be aware that some lines can be as low as 3.7 metres.
- Lower or fold equipment prior to moving.

Are you in control? Or are you just lucky?



Tom Bestwick CRSP, CSB Safety Consulting Inc.

This is the question Tom Bestwick asks workers who operate under a false sense of comfort. The former lineman-turned-safety consultant wants them to realize that their luck can run out – with deadly consequences.

During his 40 years of experience with electricity, he has witnessed his share of related incidents in the workplace, many resulting in severe burns, amputation, even death. In every case, complacency played a role. “You can be doing all the right things to have the proper warnings in place,” he says. “But workers are focused on the task at hand, and they’ve driven by or walked by or seen the warnings a hundred times.”

Proper training in the workplace is crucial but ultimately, the responsibility lies with the individual to maintain their respect for electricity. “As soon as you lose it or forget... you leave yourself open for error and the unfortunate consequences of electric shock or worse,” he says. “Those bad habits can lead to short cuts and the feeling you don’t need to follow rules and procedures.”

“Just remember that your co-worker is somebody else’s kid,” he says. “And you can hope that when your child gets into the workforce, they’re working with someone like you, right?”

3 RULES TO A SAFE WORK ENVIRONMENT

Before you start any job, always remember:

1. **Make a work plan to include the location of overhead and underground power lines.**
2. **Know the height of your equipment.**
3. **Stay at least seven metres away from power lines.**

ESCAPING AN ENERGIZED VEHICLE

If your vehicle contacts an overhead or underground power line, remain calm. If you can safely drive at least 10 metres away, do so. Keep people away and immediately call 911 to report the incident. If you cannot drive away safely, call 911 immediately. Remain in the vehicle until assistance from the electric utility arrives and confirms that the power is shut off and that it’s safe to exit the vehicle. Tell others to stay at least 10 metres away from the overhead or underground power line.

Exit only if you are in **immediate** danger (e.g. fire) and only if it’s your last resort. Jump clear away from the line and equipment with your arms crossed across your chest, and land with both feet together. Never touch the vehicle and the ground simultaneously. Slowly shuffle or bunny hop to safety, without letting the heel of one foot pass the other. Continue to do this for a minimum of 10 metres.

NAOSH WEEK 2010:

May 2 – 8

Every year, North American Occupational Safety and Health (NAOSH) Week hosts a series of events in communities across North America that focus on the prevention of injury and illness in the workplace. For events in your area visit www.naosh.org/english/events/alberta.html

JUST’S MANDATE

In 2006, Alberta’s electric utilities and the Alberta Government formed the Joint Utility Safety Team (JUST) to collectively help address the common safety issue of contact with power lines.

JUST’s mandate is to positively affect change in attitudes and behaviours toward power line safety, to help reduce power line incidents. Through ongoing safety awareness and industry education, JUST is committed to helping breed a long-term “culture of power line safety” in Alberta. This involves everyone working around overhead or underground power lines, including electric utilities, oil and gas, construction, forestry and agricultural industries.

For more information, contact Mona Bartsoff, JUST Chair at 403-512-9218 or at mona.bartsoff@fortisalberta.com

Learn more about staying safe at wherestheline.ca

WHERE’S THE LINE?
POWER LINE SAFETY

The members of the Joint Utility Safety Team:

ALTALINK

ATCO Electric

ENMAX

EPCOR

FORTIS ALBERTA

Government of Alberta