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How To Avoid Electrocution from Overhead Power Lines

The best way to avoid someone getting electrocuted from a power line is to not go near them whatsoever. However, depending on the task and jobsite, which may not always be possible. When you are working on a jobsite and not able to completely stay clear of power lines, here are some safety precautions that should be taken.

1. Inspect the Site:

When you arrive at a job site, you should always thoroughly inspect all the areas of it and locate where the hazards are. That way, when briefing your crews on the job that is to be done, all employees know what the risks are and what to be careful of.

2. Educate All Employees:

All employees should have proper training and education on this topic to ensure the safety of every employee. There are many times that the person doing the task is not the one injured, but the one standing close by.

3. Post Signage:

Even though employees have been briefed about the risks and where they are located on the worksite. There should be proper signs put up in the area that is of risk to make sure everyone remembers and does not accidentally come in contact with power lines.

4. De-Energize Power Lines: (If Possible)

There are certain circumstances and locations that utility companies can de-energize the power lines for you while the work is being performed.

This is going to help ensure the safety of your employees and help to eliminate the risk of someone being electrocuted.

5. Keep A Safe Distance:

If the power lines that you are working near are not able to be de-energized, then a safe distance should always be kept between the lines and the worker.

Depending on the voltage that is being taken off from the power line will determine exactly how far away you need to be from it.

OSHA's recommended clearance distances of power lines are as follows:

Voltage up to 50 should have a minimum clearance of 10 feet

Voltage over 50 to 200 should have a minimum clearance of 15 feet

Voltage over 200 to 350 should have a minimum clearance of 20 feet

Voltage over 350 to 500 should have a minimum clearance of 25 feet

Voltage over 500 to 750 should have a minimum clearance of 35 feet

Voltage over 750 to 1,000 should have a minimum clearance of 45 feet

6. Have a Spotter:

In many situations on a construction site, it is the safest when you have [a spotter](#) with you, near power lines are no exception to that. Someone to help communicate and make sure there are not any barriers to hearing what is being discussed.

For example, one of the many reasons that there should always be a spotter is in the instance of a hazardous situation occurring. If you are unable to exit your equipment due to the risk of electrocution, the spotter can contact the person in charge to help execute the situation.

911 should always be contacted when there is a situation involving a power line.