



Hazard Alert

Overhead Power Line Contact

These accidents highlight the hazards of working in close proximity to overhead power lines. Please review the following incidents with your employees and follow the recommended Safe Work Practices listed on page 3.

Incident Summaries

February 2005

At approximately 0740 hours, a worker was fatally injured when the mast of the Joy MS2 Air Track he was moving came into contact with a 14.4 kilovolt overhead power line. A second worker walking alongside the Air Track to control an air hose was uninjured.

The two workers arrived on site at 7:00 a.m. to drill six holes that required them to change the Air Track's drill steel from 12-foot to 14-foot steel. The workers carried the 14-foot drill steel (without bit) from another drill parked on the far side of the overhead power line. They raised the drill mast to install the 14-foot drill steel but did not lower it, since a new bit also had to be installed. The workers proceeded to walk the Air Track to the location of the new bit. After moving approximately 135 feet, the upright drill mast came into contact with the overhead line, resulting in the fatality.





September 2006

At approximately 1600 hours, a drill being moved with its mast up contacted with and subsequently pulled down a 13.8 kilovolt high-voltage power line.

October 2009

At approximately 1400 hours, an employee discovered a broken neutral line conductor that had fallen to the ground from an overhead power line. Subsequently, while spreading crush on the road, a truck box came into contact with the neutral line conductor. Neither the grader operator nor the truck drivers noticed the line come into contact with the truck box.



February 2011

At approximately 0730 hours, an excavator became tangled between sets of low-voltage and communications lines while attempting to cross underneath them. As a result, a pole further along the line was pulled down, bringing an energized 5 kilovolt transformer down with it.

May 2011

At approximately 2135 hours, a haul truck driver leaving a dump area was about to lower his raised truck box when he observed another truck approaching the same area. The driver pulled to the left to let the oncoming truck access the dump.

Distracted by the second truck's approach, the driver forgot that his truck box was still raised. As he pulled forward, the truck box contacted with an energized 25 kilovolt overhead line. This caused the power line's circuit breaker to cut off power and there were no injuries.



If you have information that would benefit the health and safety of the B.C. Mining industry, or if you have comments or concerns regarding this topic, please contact

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Ministry of Energy, Mines and Natural Gas



April 2012

At approximately 0945 hours, a mine operations employee travelling along a power line access noticed smoke coming from the engine compartment of his dozer.

While shifting in his seat to get a better look, he accidentally bumped the left track control of the moving vehicle and caused the dozer to immediately veer left and shear the power pole. The operator called for assistance and remained in the cab until it was safe to exit the dozer.



Safe Work Practices

- ✓ Before starting work, perform a hazard assessment of the area. This should include overhead hazards such as power lines.
- ✓ Ensure that policies and procedures are developed for working around overhead power lines. Operators need to be trained on how to respond should a piece of equipment come into contact with an overhead line.
- ✓ Before moving equipment to a new location, become familiar with the route and ensure safe clearance distances between the equipment and all power lines along the way.
- ✓ Use signage to warn of overhead power line hazards at road crossings.
- ✓ When moving equipment under power lines, ensure proper limits are maintained as per section 4.3.6 (Overhead Supply Lines) of CSA M421-11, Use of Electricity in Mines.
- ✓ When working near overhead power lines, adhere to the requirements related to section 4.19.8 (Distance from High Voltage Conductors) of the Health, Safety and Reclamation Code for Mines in British Columbia.