



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.

Any comments or suggestions regarding this Health and Safety topic should be forwarded to E. Padley, Inspector of Mines, Electrical (Emmanuel.Padley@gov.bc.ca).



Incident Summaries

1) 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 KV overhead power line. Another worker, walking alongside the Joy 850 compressor being towed by the Air Track and helping to control the air hose feeding the Air Track, was uninjured.

The deceased and his helper had arrived on site at 0700 hours to drill the last six holes remaining to complete their work. Since these were to be deeper holes, it was necessary to change the Air Track's drill steel from 12 foot to 14 foot steel. They carried the longer steel without bit over from another drill parked on the far side of the overhead power line. To install the drill steel, they raised the drill mast into the vertical position.

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The workers did not lower the drill mast, since they also had to install a new bit, and proceeded to walk the Air Track to the location of the new bit. After moving approximately 135 feet, the upright drill mast contacted with the overhead line, resulting in the fatality.

2) September 2006

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

3) October 2009

At approximately 1400 hours, an employee discovered a broken neutral line conductor on the ground that had fallen from an overhead power line.

A worker witnessed a truck box come into contact with the neutral line conductor while the box was up spreading crush on the road. Neither the grader operator nor the truck drivers spreading the crush saw the line hit the truck box.

4) February 2011

At approximately 0730 hours, an excavator became tangled in low voltage and communications lines while crossing under overhead lines. As a result, a pole further down the line was pulled down. The broken pole had an energized 5 KV transformer mounted on it.

5) 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. To allow the oncoming truck access to the dump, the first truck pulled to the left. Distracted by the second truck's approach, the driver forgot that his truck box remained up. As he pulled forward with the box still up, the truck box contacted with an energized 25KV overhead line. The power line protection tripped, and there were no injuries.

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6) 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 bumped the left track control of the moving vehicle with his finger 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 equipment.

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 in how to respond should a piece of equipment come into contact with an overhead line.
- When moving equipment, travel the route prior to the move and ensure that proper clearances will be maintained.
- When moving equipment under power lines, ensure proper limits are maintained as per 4.3.6 Overhead Supply Lines of M421-11 (Use of Electricity in Mines).
- When working near overhead power lines, the requirements related to Section 4.19.8 of the Health Safety and Reclamation Code concerning the **Distance from High Voltage Conductors** must be maintained.
- Use signage to warn of overhead power line hazards at road crossings.

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