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AUGUST Safety Talk

Topic: Overhead Powerline Safety

Physical contact with a powerline does not have to happen for electrocution to happen from an electrical arc.

Prevention

Always maintain a safe distance from overhead powerlines. Understand the limits of approach.

- Know the potential extension length of your machine.
- Identify where the power lines are at your site and watch for them while in their vicinity.
- Take note if anything is different about the power lines, such as sagging or missing lines (which may mean a line is on the ground).
- Install appropriate markers for each overhead power line to include signage in both directions and on both sides of the Right of Way.
- Spotter should wear high visibility vest, and be properly trained for the specific job duty.
- Spotter must have a method of alerting the operator when getting too close to the power line (ie. Air horn). Test the method to ensure operator can hear and everyone understands the signal.
- When you approach power lines, make sure machine attachments are as low as possible. If you are not sure then stop and make sure.

Limits of Approach from WorkSafeBC Regulation		
Voltage	Minimum approach distance for working close to exposed electrical equipment or conductors	
	Metres	Feet
Phase to phase		
Over 750 V to 75 kV	3	10
Over 75 kV to 250 kV	4.5	15
Over 250 kV to 550 kV	6	20



If contact is made

- Stay calm and stop the machine.
- Shift to neutral, set the parking brake and shut down engine.
- Spotter should call for assistance.
- **STAY SEATED IN THE CAB OR ON THE MACHINE** until someone comes and checks the location of the line. You cannot see everything around and under your machine. It may look safe to you, but the spotter on the ground can see more and make a better judgment.
- If you **MUST** leave the machine (for instance, if it is on fire), jump from the machine, keeping feet close together. Shuffle away from the machine, keeping feet close together.
- After the power line is removed by the utility company, equipment must be thoroughly inspected before use.