

HEALTH & SAFETY OPERATIONAL GUIDELINE			
Title:	OVERHEAD ELECTRICAL WIRES		
Section:	SAFE WORK	Number:	05-017
Subsection:	WORK SPECIFIC	Effective Date:	August 2010

Definitions

“minimum distance” means the space between an object and an energized overhead electrical conductor based on voltage rating, as set-out below:

Nominal phase-to-phase voltage rating¹	Minimum distance²
750 or more volts, but no more than 150,000 volts	3 metres
>150,000 volts but < 250,000 volts	4.5 metres
≥ 250,000 volts	6 metres
1. Identify the voltage by checking markings on the pole or call the utility. 2. Wind can blow power lines, reducing the distance between the conductor and object. Always try to keep further away than the minimum.	

“object” includes a hoisting device, lift, crane, backhoe, power shovel, dump box, vehicle or vehicle load, any tool and equipment

“operator” means a worker operating a hoisting device, lift, crane, backhoe, power shovel or vehicle

Purpose and Scope

- Describe overhead electrical hazards
- Establish minimum distances from electrical hazards for the safe operation of equipment
- Raise awareness of these hazards
- Describe procedures to control these hazards

General

The hazards associated with overhead electrical wires impact the safety of everyone on a job site. The procedures described in this guideline must be followed to ensure that workers are fully aware of these hazards and take necessary steps to control these hazards.

Always assume overhead electrical wires to be energized unless informed otherwise by the electrical utility.

No object shall encroach upon the minimum distance from an overhead electrical wire.

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Procedures

1. Prior to the start of any work around overhead electrical wires, workers will:
 - survey the work site
 - identify overhead hazards
 - ensure everyone on the work site is aware of the overhead hazards
 - assess the ability to work without encroaching upon the minimum distance
 - assess clearances between equipment, power poles and guy wires and plan the work accordingly
2. If appropriate, the electrical utility may be called to de-energize, insulate, move or otherwise isolate the overhead electrical wire.
3. Whenever possible, adequate warning devices visible to a worker and warning of overhead electrical wires will be positioned in the vicinity of the hazard. The electrical utility may be contacted for assistance if appropriate.
4. A legible sign, visible to the operator and warning of the overhead electrical hazard, shall be posted in the operator's cab.
5. If an operator is unable to accurately assess the minimum distance, a spotter with a clear view of the hazard shall be stationed so that the spotter is in full view of the operator. The spotter will warn the operator each time any part of a vehicle or its load (or equipment) approaches the minimum distance.
6. Do not use a metal ladder if it could encroach into the minimum distance.

Personal Protective Equipment

- Head protection
- Foot protection
- High visibility, tear-away safety vest
- Eye, hearing, skin and respiratory protection, where appropriate

Emergency Procedures

1. If a **vehicle** comes into contact with an energized wire:
 - call the electrical utility
 - if possible, the operator should try to break contact with the wire
 - the operator shall remain inside the vehicle until the wire is de-energized
 - if necessary to leave the vehicle, the operator shall leap with both feet together as far away from the vehicle as possible
 - keep others away

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Emergency Procedures (cont'd)

2. If a **worker** comes into contact with an energized wire:
 - do not touch the victim if still in contact with or in close proximity to the wire
 - call 911
 - call the electrical utility
 - do not touch or attempt to move the wire
3. If an energized overhead **wire is knocked down**:
 - stay away from the wire
 - call the electrical utility
 - do not touch or attempt to move the wire
4. Any accidental contact with a live electrical conductor of 750 volts or more must be reported to the Ministry of Labour and the Electrical Safety Authority and documented on an Incident Report.

Maintenance/Testing/Inspection

Vehicles will be regularly inspected to ensure a legible warning sign is posted in the operator's cab.

THIS GUIDELINE TAKES EFFECT IMMEDIATELY AND REMAINS IN EFFECT UNTIL REPLACED BY A NEW GUIDELINE OR SUPERSEDED BY LEGISLATION/REGULATION

ORIGINAL SIGNED

Employer Co-Chair, JHSC

Worker Co-Chair, JHSC