

TOOL BOX TALKS

Death by Power Lines

Power line contacts kill workers on a regular basis in the United States. Power lines are present on almost all jobsites. Power lines can be contacted by ladders, booms, cables and dump beds. Workers rarely survive a power line contact. They're intensely and severely burned as the electricity takes path to ground through their body. When workers do survive, they are subjected to many future operations like skin grafting and physical therapy. Review this Tool Box Talk with employees.

WORKSAFE TIPS

PREVENT POWER LINE CONTACT

- Survey the work area for overhead power lines before extending any booms or raising any beds.
- Always look up before raising any kind of tool.
- Ask the power company to sleeve or boot power lines that cause concern for accidental contact.
- Shut down overhead power lines that are not needed.
- Move dump and loading areas away from power lines.
- Place cones, flags or signs below overhead lines to warn operators and drivers about overhead hazards.
- Use tag lines when using cranes to lift objects. The cable can contact a power line. Tag lines (ropes) prevent the attendant from being shocked through the hands.
- Survey trees for hidden power lines before beginning the tree trimming or removal process.
- Stay a minimum of ten feet from power lines.
- Electricity can arc through the air like lightning, seeking path to ground through your truck or equipment.
- Always look up before raising ladders.
- Use non-conductive ladders and boom truck booms when doing any kind of electrical work.
- Remember that rain water or wet non-conductive equipment becomes conductive.
- Dump truck drivers should not dump and roll if there is any chance an overhead line could be contacted.
- Track hoes and loaders can contact lines with their buckets.

Two mechanics were killed when the truck boom contacted overhead lines



Fire truck contacted power lines



Fatality: forklift contacted lines



Power line running through a tree.

