

## Falls from Elevation in the Electric Power Utility Industry



**41 Electric power utility workers were seriously injured in falls from poles, ladders, and other elevated surfaces in 2000-2004, resulting in 3,530 days off work.**



The injuries from these accidents were so serious, the workers had to take time off from work or in some cases were permanently disabled. These serious injuries are costly and affect your industrial insurance premiums. They contribute to the reason for the base rate of \$1.28 per hour per employee paid by contractors and employers in 2006. If your company has a higher than average number of injuries (claims), your “experience rating” could increase by as much as 25% in one year to \$1.59 per hour per employee.

Stated in another way, if you had 5 full-time workers and had an average number of injuries (claims), you would pay about \$13,312 in premiums in 2006. If your experience rating increased by 25% because you had higher than average injuries, you would pay about \$3,224 more or \$16,536 in premiums in 2006.

### Causes of fall injuries

Injuries to workers commonly result from falling from poles, ladders, platforms, equipment, and other elevated surfaces. Falls occur when

- climbers (“hooks”) dislodge from poles
- ladders move or fall over
- workers slip or misstep
- defective/damaged equipment is used or equipment is improperly used
- work is performed in an unsafe manner (e.g., over-reaching while on ladder)

Environmental conditions (rain, ice, mud, etc.) also play an important role in increasing the risk of a fall.



Hooks that are not securely planted into the pole can dislodge and cause a fall.

### Ways to prevent falls

- Inspect and replace any defective equipment.
- Set up ladders stably and securely to prevent them from slipping, moving, or falling.
- Use both hands when climbing up and down the ladder. Do not over-reach when working on it.
- Make sure hooks are securely planted into utility poles.
- Keep shoes, steps, and surfaces dry and clean of ice, water, mud, and oil. Wear slip-resistant shoes to improve traction.
- Watch where you are stepping, especially when descending.
- Use fall protection systems when necessary.



Make sure the ladder is secured to prevent it from slipping, moving, or falling over.