

## Working too close to overhead power lines

**Attention:** Construction employers in Washington State

### DANGER – OVERHEAD POWER LINES

The Department of Labor & Industries has noticed an increasing number of construction inspections where workers are exposed to overhead power lines.

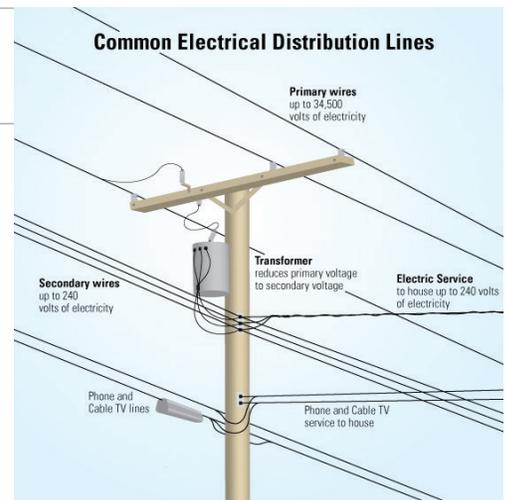
Working within 10 feet of overhead power lines increases the risk of electrical shock from accidental contact with these lines. Workers are exposed to the risk of death by electrocution or serious and disabling injuries.

Contact can and has occurred while using long-handled tools and ladders; during construction of exterior walls and roofing; or when using any type of equipment that can be lifted, such as backhoes, truck-mounted manlifts, scissor lifts or conveyors.

These incidents occur when the hazard is not identified and corrected prior to employees working in the area, or when employees aren't trained to recognize the hazard (for example, recognizing the difference between telephone and cable lines vs. power lines.)

### What should I do to protect my workers?

- Provide training to employees on overhead power-line safety.
- Before beginning any work, survey the worksite for overhead power lines. Overhead power-line safety should be part of your accident prevention program and discussed regularly during crew-leader meetings and throughout the duration of the job.
- Consider all overhead lines as energized.
- Work in conjunction with the local utility company when overhead power lines are present at the worksite.



Survey the site for overhead power lines prior to beginning construction work.

### How can I prevent overhead power-line contact on my work sites?

- If overhead lines are present, consider calling the utility company and find out what voltage is on the lines. Ask if the utility company can shut off the lines while you are working near them.
- If overhead lines cannot be shut down, continue working closely with the utility company to come up with a viable solution.



---

## Know the safety rules to prevent employee exposure to overhead power lines

In most cases, you will find overhead power lines in the vicinity of construction sites. To prevent overhead power-line accidents, you should familiarize yourself with the Washington State

construction rule for overhead power lines. This will provide the necessary information needed to provide a safe work area for your workers.

For more information, please see “Overhead Power Lines” at the [Safety & Health Topics search](#)

---

## Other resources you can access

Find an **electronic** copy of this [Hazard Alert](#)

### Rules:

Rules that address Accident Prevention Programs, housekeeping, hazard communication, and other requirements for construction can be found in WAC 296-155.

[L&I Safety Web page](#)

For other related rules, contact your local L&I office or visit the Safety Rules webpage.

## How can I get help from Labor & Industries?

The Department of Labor & Industries provides consultations, training, and technical assistance at no cost to employers.

Call today to schedule a free confidential consultation or go to [Request Consultation](#) for more information. You may also call 1-800-423-7233 or visit a local L&I office and ask for the Consultation Manager.

---

*This alert was developed by L&I's Division of Occupational Safety and Health (DOSHS) to alert employers, labor groups, and employees to potential hazards associated with work activities. **This is not a rule and creates no new legal obligations.** The information provided includes suggested guidance on how to avoid workplace hazards and describes relevant mandatory safety and health rules. DOSHS recommends you also check the related rules for additional requirements.*