

18.55 High Voltage Electrical and Telecommunications Hazards

Updated: July 10, 2013

I. Purpose

This Directive is established to provide guidance to compliance and consultation staff, to ensure only qualified CSHOs are permitted to engage in DOSH inspection and consultation activities related to High Voltage Electrical and Telecommunications hazards.

II. Scope and Application

This Directive applies to all DOSH enforcement and consultation activities covered under the scope and application of Chapters 296-45 WAC and 296-32 WAC. This Directive updates *DD 18.55, Electrical and Telecommunication Hazards*, issued October 15, 2010, and replaces all previous guidance, whether formal or informal.

For the purpose of this Directive, “CSHO” refers to Compliance and Consultation staff.

III. Background

The operation and maintenance of electric power generation, control, transformation, transmission, and distribution lines and equipment present significant hazards and require specialized knowledge and training. The Electrical Workers (Chapter 296-45 WAC), and Telecommunications (Chapter 296-32 WAC) Standards are designed to protect employees exposed to dangers such as electric shock, electrocution, fires, and explosions.

DOSH recognizes the unique nature and qualifications required of high voltage electrical workers and telecommunications workers. DOSH has a dedicated High Voltage Electrical and Telecommunications section that has been in place for over 50 years. DOSH technical staff have been following and enforcing the electrical workers safety rules, which have been in existence for over 100 years.

The technical staff in the High Voltage Electrical and Telecommunications section conduct enforcement inspections related to:

- The operation, construction and maintenance of electric power generation, control, transformation, transmission, and distribution lines and equipment, **and**
- Telecommunications towers, lines and related equipment.

The technical staff also assists with related consultation activities, as needed.

IV. Special Consultation and Compliance Protocols

A. Qualifications for Conducting Inspections and Consultations.

1. Only designated and “qualified” High Voltage and Telecommunications CSHOs are permitted to engage in DOSH activities related to the scope and application of Chapters 296-45 WAC and 296-32 WAC.
2. For the purpose of this Directive, “qualified” is defined as a person who:
 - Is familiar with and trained in the construction, operation and maintenance of lines and equipment in the High Voltage/Telecom industries.
 - Is fully aware of the related hazards and the procedures required to eliminate them.
 - Has passed and possesses a journey level status/certification for the particular branch of the Electrical/Telecommunication trades with which they are connected.
3. CSHOs must also have the training required by WAC 296-45-065(1) in order to be considered qualified.
4. If no qualified personnel are available, the Regional Compliance or Consultation Manager must contact the High Voltage Electrical and Telecommunications Supervisor, for assistance.

B. Referrals.

Referrals must be made to the High Voltage Electrical and Telecommunications Supervisor or staff, for inspections or consultations that involve activities covered under the scope of Chapters 296-45 WAC or 296-32 WAC. However, CSHOs are not prohibited from addressing related issues such as:

- Encroachment of high voltage lines by cranes or equipment operated by “unqualified” workers or contractors not related to the building or maintaining of the utility/power system
- Flagging and traffic control issues, **or**
- Trenching and excavations specifically covered by Chapter 296-155 WAC.

C. Encroachment of High Voltage Lines by Cranes or Equipment.

When conducting inspections, CSHOs must keep their own safety in mind, and must stay out of the worksite area until the lead worker or person in charge is contacted. CSHOs must be mindful that their actions do not create a hazard to the workers.

Once the area is verified safe to enter by the lead worker or person in charge of the site, CSHOs may proceed with the inspection related to encroachment of high voltage lines by cranes or equipment operated by “unqualified” workers or contractors, as specifically covered by Chapter 296-155 WAC.

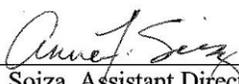
D. Flagging Issues.

If the electrical utility, telecommunication, or qualified construction company working on the electrical/communications system has employees working in an elevated position, on a transformer, or in a manhole, CSHOs must stay out of the work area until they receive permission to enter from the lead worker or person in charge. CSHOs must only address the related “flagging issues” and must refer all work practice issues to the High Voltage Electrical and Telecommunications Supervisor or staff.

E. Trenching and Excavation Hazards.

If the electrical utility, telecommunication, or qualified construction company has employees performing the excavation work, CSHOs must stay out of the work area until they receive permission to enter from the lead worker or person in charge of the site. CSHOs must only address the related “trenching and excavation hazards” as covered by Chapter 296-155 WAC, and must refer all work practice issues to the High Voltage Electrical and Telecommunications Supervisor or staff.

Approved: _____


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