

Timely warning – Always Look Up and Live

Following the recent tragic incident in north west Victoria, Victoria's electricity distributor SP AusNet and Energy Safe Victoria (ESV) are again warning of the need to 'Look Up and Live'.

In 2008 there were 23 incidents involving overhead powerlines across SP AusNet's distribution network, which more than doubled to 53 incidents in 2009.

SP AusNet Director of Health and Safety, Phil Walters said there was concern the message to be vigilant around overhead powerlines wasn't being heard.

"Around this time of year bulk deliveries of fertiliser, lime and other materials are made to farms and it's therefore timely to remind truck drivers and farmers that safety must never be compromised," he said.

"Truck drivers and farmers must always take care around overhead powerlines because the consequences can unfortunately be fatal.

"People should not forget that while trucks are getting bigger, powerlines are staying at the same height. It should also be remembered that powerlines move during high winds or periods of high electricity demand," he said.

Mr Walters said there were a number of simple and straightforward precautions that must be observed when working with trucks or machinery near powerlines. Victoria's comprehensive 'No Go Zone' rules and regulations must always be observed.

These precautions are detailed in a free Energy Safe Victoria DVD that focuses on safety around overhead powerlines and underground electrical equipment.

ESV's Director of Energy Safety Mr Paul Fearon said there was hardly a day that passed without an incident involving contact with electrical equipment being reported to ESV, particularly with overhead powerlines.

"Fortunately, the vast majority of reported incidents do not result in death or injury. However, in most cases this is due to good luck rather than any conscious observation by people involved of the required safety precautions."

Mr Fearon said that copies of the free DVD titled 'Look Up, Look Down – And Live' can be ordered from ESV on 1800 800 156 or through the ESV website at www.esv.vic.gov.au.

SP AusNet and ESV recommend the following safety advice to truck drivers, machinery operators, property owners and other workers when in the vicinity of overhead powerlines:

- Identify all areas where powerlines cross properties;
- Obtain a copy of the 'No Go Zone' rules and regulations and study them closely – available at www.esv.vic.gov.au;

For Media Enquiries please contact:

Sean Sampson from SP AusNet on 03 9625 0199

David Guthrie-Jones from Energy Safe Victoria on 03 9230 9700

- When operating machinery, vehicles or equipment, stay at least 6.4 metres clear of high voltage overhead powerlines, and 10 metres clear of transmission lines
- Monitor weather conditions. Powerlines can move in high winds or on days of high electricity demand;
- Be aware that powerlines can be difficult to see at all times, particularly dawn and dusk;
- Remember that electricity can jump gaps;
- Remember that no work should be carried out within the confines of powerlines, whether it's a last resort or not;
- Relocate bulk delivery storage sites to a safe area away from powerlines;
- Display 'Look Up and Live' stickers on any machinery or equipment that is raised overhead;
- Obtain a free copy of the 'Look Up, Look Down – And Live' DVD from ESV
- Identify all electrical hazards before starting work. If in any doubt contact SP AusNet

SP AusNet and ESV are broadcasting television and radio commercials in regional areas warning people to always 'Look Up and Live'.

'Look Up and Live' brochures, stickers and posters are also available from ESV. One of the stickers, which can be placed on the inside of windscreens, details the safe working distances that must be observed between trucks, machinery and power poles.

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