

Work around Live Power Lines!



Electricity Hazards – Are we taking them seriously? Work around live power lines is nothing new; indeed some contractors have developed great expertise in this field.

These contractors will tell you that successful ‘work around live power lines’ starts with meticulous hazard identification and planning; it involves early and regular communication with all stakeholders and careful observance of the rules, including those found in the **Safe Op – Working Near Live Power Lines**.

Notwithstanding, a good number of contractors have had instances of contact with live power lines – a real cause for concern! Fortunately, these events have not resulted in harm or injury – likely a matter of good luck!

Recently, however, we have had two cases of excavators walking under and taking down live lines; another case where a worker touched a downed power pole, then drove under the suspended line and a thinning worker was electrocuted.



Investigations and Learning!

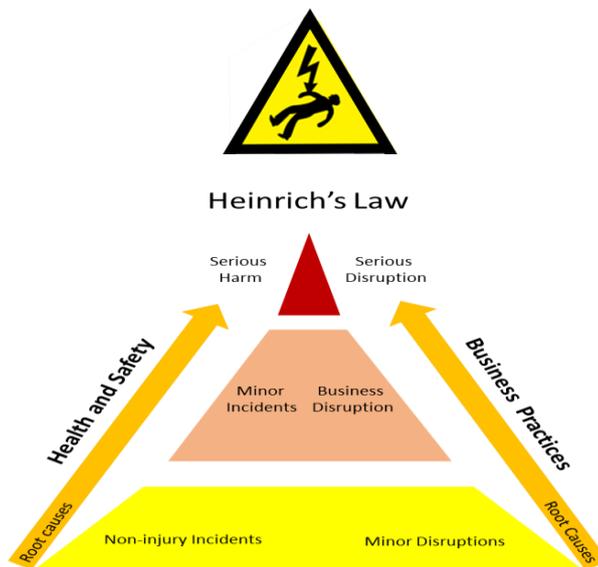
- Complete a thorough reconnaissance of the work area – identify all the hazards and risks.
- Plan thoroughly, supervise diligently – do not leave anything to chance!
- Know the rules for work around live power lines – do not think that you know better!

Are we at the top of our Triangle?

Near hits – an indicator of harm!

Heinrich's Law suggests that for every event that causes a major injury (e.g. a death) there are near-hits that share common root causes.

The quote “near-hits are lessons for free” allows us to see that we can learn from near hits by making the necessary changes before the more serious events happen. **The question – will we learn? Live power line incidents** are a case in point. Are we learning and making the necessary changes to prevent a ‘top of the triangle’ incident? The information below will help us...



FIPS 7577, 29/12/15 – Minor Injury (High Potential Incident)

Two silviculture workers (waste thinning) were working at cutting regeneration under power lines which were not obvious, and had not been identified during the planning process¹.

A tree struck the power line bringing it to the ground where it started a small fire. At a distance away, one of the workers attempted to cut a nearby branch that had caught on fire. As his chainsaw made contact with the branch, the worker received an electric shock.

We must learn from incidents... and apply what we learn!

- [] Add **specific prompts** for utilities and other significant hazards to job checklists.
- [] Complete a pre-start hazard ID **before starting each new job** – no matter how small.
- [] **Highlight significant hazards** on maps, in written prescriptions and verbally.
- [] Managers – concern yourself with planning; **periodically audit** the planning process.
- [] **Follow** the relevant ACoP's and safety rules e.g. Safe Ops and GSR's.
- [] Discuss the job with all **stakeholders** – especially land and forest owners.

¹ It is of interest that the line (network) owner had made separate arrangements with the landowner to clear around the power lines. This clearing job was scheduled to occur around the time of the waste thinning job. Unfortunately, this important piece of information was not communicated to the forest manager and/or the contractor. Everyone in the chain (from April all PCBU's) must appreciate the need to both discuss and apportion responsibility.

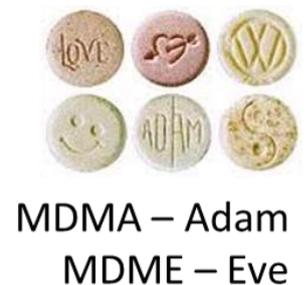
2016 D&A Survey Questionnaire

Have you completed the 2016 D&A Survey Questionnaire form?

Your opinions/suggestions are important, further, as employers and employees how you answer/comment will help to shape our testing programmes...

For your convenience – the survey is now online:

https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/pfolsen-Drugs_and_Alcohol-Survey



Think about trainees and younger people!

FIPS 7618, 27/01/16: A silviculture thinner was using a chainsaw to clear vegetation to access the next tree. He stepped forward and caught his foot on a vine causing him to trip and fall forwards landing on his chainsaw. He cut his forearm on the chain, which was still moving but the saw was not under throttle, resulting in a 5mm deep laceration.

Our investigation shows that the injured person was working in steep country (>30°) also having a thick native understorey. With some four months experience he was still under training. This was the third incident he had been involved in during the last three months! Do you hear the alarm bells ringing? What would have assisted?

- Close supervision including monitoring – for one thing, to ensure that the chainsaw brake had been applied when moving from tree to tree.
- Review **Jason's story** with your workers – it is a confronting, very honest look into a preventable workplace incident, where training and supervision were lacking.

https://www.worksafe.qld.gov.au/?utm_source=jasons+story+film+launch&utm_medium=email&utm_content=worksafe+website+link&utm_campaign=jasons+story

The new Forestry Assessment Tool

Forestry Assessment Tool

NOVEMBER 2015



HEALTH AND SAFETY SYSTEM EFFECTIVENESS

- > Check if health and safety system is effective
- > Monitor work practices and equipment
- > Check principal is monitoring the health and safety system

1.4 HAZARD MANAGEMENT

Check site hazards recorded and controls are in place.

- > Check register of hazards and controls are:
 - consistent
 - linked to "tailgate alterations" and
 - reviewed

WORKSAFE
NEW ZEALAND | MAHI HAUMARU
AOTEAROA

Inspectors – take a new approach!

WorkSafe NZ Inspectors have been using a revised [forestry assessment tool](#) since November 2015.

This new tool is **not a guide to good practice** e.g. like the BPG and the ACoP.

It does focus on effective and operating Health and Safety Systems. WorkSafe NZ say...

The "...intention (of assessments) is to focus our work more on risk, and not reduce the depth of our assessments **where risk is not being effectively eliminated or minimised.**"

Additionally, Inspectors will be "...**talking to crew** (the workers) about how and how well the systems work, with Inspectors looking for **positive evidence** that the systems are working..."

They also say "...**exhaustive notes (records) are not expected.** Notes and record entries should follow standard practice guidance and should record findings and contain **sufficient detail** to enable the Inspector to substantiate decisions made."

Inspectors can also use their own judgement to focus on areas that, in their experience, stand out as important. In other words, the forestry assessment tool is a guideline as to what might take place during a visit and Inspectors have a far greater scope as to how they will conduct an on-site visit.