

# Safety and health alert

## 06/01 Scaffolder receives electric shock

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### Incident

A scaffolder was dismantling scaffolding on a building construction site. He was moving a 6.5m scaffold pole that was leaning against the building to a stacking area adjacent to the roadside. He held the scaffold pole upright with both hands and walked towards the stacking area. The scaffold pole contacted the low voltage overhead power lines and he received a severe electric shock.

### Factors

1. The storage of and stacking of scaffold material and a rubbish bin directly beneath the overhead power lines.
2. Failure to conduct a risk assessment on the site before dismantling or storing the scaffolding.

### Recommendations

- Persons intending to work in the vicinity of overhead power lines shall comply with the legal requirements.
- Ensure that an employee or any plant or material used or controlled by an employee does not enter the danger zone of an overhead power line. The danger zone means anywhere that is:
  - within 0.5 metres of a live insulated overhead power line or aerial bundled conductor line of voltage of not more than 1,000 volts;
  - within 1.0 metre of a live uninsulated overhead power line of a voltage of not more than 1,000 volts;
  - within 3.0 metres of a live overhead power line, whether insulated or not, of a voltage exceeding 1,000 volts but not more than 33,000 volts; or
  - within 6.0 metres of a live overhead power line, whether insulated or not, of a voltage exceeding 33,000 volts.
- Contact Western Power or the local supply authority to confirm the type of overhead power lines in the vicinity of the work area, and to obtain the appropriate permit, where the legal requirements are impracticable to comply with.
- Make sure there is always a safe clear distance between live overhead power lines and cranes, elevating work platforms, hoists, scaffolds, formwork and portable ladders. Where this is not going to be possible, contact Western Power or the local supply authority.
- Work within these danger zones should only take place if the overhead power lines have been adequately insulated and effectively cordoned off or otherwise made safe, according to the requirements of Western Power or the local supply authority.
- When there is a risk of workers being exposed to an electrical hazard, do not start work until a pre-start/job meeting and a risk assessment have been completed, and all persons understand their role and the work to be carried out.
- Establish and maintain safe storage areas clear of overhead power lines.



## Further Information

Further information can be obtained from the WorkSafe internet site [www.worksafe.wa.gov.au](http://www.worksafe.wa.gov.au), or by contacting customer service on 1300 307 877 or email: [safety@docep.wa.gov.au](mailto:safety@docep.wa.gov.au).

Date: March 2001

A413103

