

PestSure Safety

INSURING THE FUTURE OF PEST CONTROL

Tips

A five-minute training Series for Pest Management Professionals.

Safety Near Electrical Lines

Our duties in pest control expose us to working around power lines. Each year, fifty-five construction workers are killed by electrocution from contact with overhead power lines. Over 90 percent of the contacts involved overhead distribution lines. These are the same lines that run in the alleys behind our houses and through our job sites.



Power lines are such a common sight to us that at times we might not even notice their existence. Two false beliefs exist that might increase your chance of being injured: 1) that some overhead lines don't carry enough power to kill and; 2) power lines are well-insulated. Both of these beliefs are false.

The leading category of contact with distribution lines involves heavy equipment use. Cranes, drilling rigs, concrete pumps, backhoes, or as is common in pest control, aerial buckets or lifts. Our use of ladders and our work on rooftops, also expose us to this electrocution hazard. When contact occurs between the equipment and the power line, the electricity looks for the shortest distance to ground. The worker is often in this path, and is electrocuted.

Fatalities associated with high-reach aerial baskets usually occur when the basket makes direct contact with the power line. The largest numbers of contacts happen during machinery movement rather than during the setup or take-down phase.

During setup and use operators are more careful but when the work is completed, they use less caution retracting and removing the equipment.

The use of metal extension ladders around power lines is also a frequent cause of fatalities. One study on ladder electrocutions found that virtually all fatalities involved metal ladders. Ladder contacts usually occur during erection, lowering or relocation of the ladder.



Protect yourself from live power lines; examine and assess your work area and identify the location of all power lines before you move or erect any equipment. Make certain that *no* part of *any* equipment can come within a minimum of 10 feet from the power line.

Always take the time to assess your work area before starting your service. A quick review and walk through for the sole purpose of spotting hazards is a good investment in your personal safety.