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Plan ahead for moving high loads

Essential Energy is urging drivers transporting high loads to plan ahead following several recent incidents of trucks and heavy machinery contacting the electricity network in regional and rural NSW.

General Manager Safety, HR and Environment, David Nardi, said drivers should know their vehicle height and the minimum clearance distances required when travelling under or near the overhead electricity network.

“More than a dozen incidents have already occurred across the Essential Energy footprint in 2018 involving high loads or heavy machinery,” David said. “Not only do these incidents pose a threat to the personal safety of the machinery operators, they also have the potential to impact the safety of the public and cause unnecessary power supply outages.”

Essential Energy recommends drivers plan a travel path that maintains required powerline clearances. If the height of the load is more than 4.6 metres, carriers must contact Essential Energy on **13 23 91** to verify powerline heights.

“Drivers should visually check all powerlines for damaged or low wires before passing under them,” David said.

“Powerlines can sag in extreme heat or sway in the wind and, therefore, reduce the clearance required for high vehicles to safely pass underneath.

“Pay particular attention to service lines as they often decrease in height where they connect to houses or cross roads.”

If your vehicle does contact overhead powerlines, call Essential Energy immediately on **13 20 80** or emergency services (**000**) if the situation is life threatening. Remain calm and stay in the vehicle until the power has been isolated and the wires removed.

“Always treat powerlines and anything in contact with them as live and advise anyone near the incident to stay at least eight metres clear,” David said.

For more electrical safety information, visit essentialenergy.com.au/safety

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