

Media Release



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Stay electrical safety-wise on the worksite

Essential Energy is reminding tradespeople and construction workers to consider electrical safety on worksites following the announcement of a Senate inquiry into industrial deaths in Australia.

According to Safe Work Australia, an average of four per cent of work-related deaths in Australia were caused by contact with electricity between 2007 and 2016*.

General Manager Safety, HR and Environment, David Nardi, said the construction industry was one of the top at-risk groups targeted by Essential Energy's annual Public Electrical Safety Awareness Plan.

"The program aims to increase awareness of the potential safety hazards associated with working near the electricity network," David said. "We then deliver targeted public safety messages to those at-risk industries and regions."

In 2016-17, the building industry, including construction and demolition, accounted for 126 incidents of contact with Essential Energy's electricity network – 15 per cent of total public safety incidents.

"Of the 66 construction-related incidents involving contact with the electricity network, more than half were related to earthmoving activities," David said.

Essential Energy recommends on-site safety inductions to identify the location of potential electrical hazards in any work environment and appointing a competent safety observer to monitor work teams and guide machinery near overhead powerlines.

"If you are excavating, consider the location of equipment relative to underground and overhead powerlines, street light columns and pillar boxes," David said.

"Identify the location of underground utility assets before beginning work by registering with the free *Dial before you dig* referral service at www.1100.com.au.

"Assess the potential risk of working close to an electrical hazard and ensure appropriate controls are put in place to prevent incidents occurring."

For more information on electrical safety in the workplace, visit www.essentialenergy.com.au/safety.

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*<https://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/statistics-and-research/statistics/fatalities/fatality-statistics>

Essential Energy is the operator of one of Australia's largest electricity networks spanning 95 per cent of New South Wales. Owned by the New South Wales Government, Essential Energy also provides water and sewerage services to customers in far western New South Wales.