

Media release

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Regional construction boom prompts electrical safety reminder

With construction booming in regional hubs across the State, Essential Energy is encouraging tradespeople and construction workers to remember electrical safety on the job.

So far in 2019 there have been more than 40 construction related energy network safety incidents, the majority involving excavators striking underground services.

An Essential Energy spokesperson said the construction industry was one of the top at-risk groups targeted by Essential Energy's annual Public Electrical Safety Awareness Plan.

"Essential Energy is working to increase awareness of the potential safety hazards associated with working near the electricity network.

"There were 116 incidents involving the construction industry in the last financial year across the Essential Energy network, with 44 of those involving an excavator," they 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.

"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."

NSW legislation requires people who are planning to do excavation work to obtain copies of underground electricity cable plans through Dial Before you Dig (Phone 1100) and to make sure that the plans are no more than 30 days old when excavation commences.

Anyone working within three metres of overhead or underground powerlines should contact Essential Energy for detailed safety advice.

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

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FACT FILE:

- Essential Energy builds, operates and maintains one of Australia's largest electricity distribution networks, servicing regional, rural and remote NSW, and parts of southern Queensland.
- Our footprint covers 95 percent of NSW, traversing 737,000 square kilometres of landmass with 183,612 km of powerline.
- The network services more than 855,000 customers with approximately 4.6 customers to each kilometre of powerline, which is almost one-tenth the customer density compared with our counterparts in NSW.
- Essential Energy's footprint also includes 1.38 million power poles, equating to 1.6 power poles per customer.