

Media Release



16 October 2017

Take care with electricity for Safe Work Month

Essential Energy is encouraging workers across NSW to consider “watt” they can do about workplace electrical safety in conjunction with National Safe Work Month.

General Manager Safety, HR and Environment, David Nardi, said Essential Energy works closely with a variety of at-risk industries across its footprint to promote awareness of the potential for contact with the electricity network.

“National Safe Work Month is a great reminder to agricultural, construction and trade-based workers to proactively consider workplace electrical hazards,” David said.

“Anyone operating excavators, tip trucks, cranes and high load machinery are at risk of contact with the electricity network and should always maintain safe distances from powerlines.”

Essential Energy recommends operators be aware of the height of their equipment, in both the raised and lowered positions, as well as the height and voltage of the overhead powerlines in their work area. If in doubt, contact Essential Energy on 13 23 91 for advice.

Safe Work Australia reports that NSW had the highest number of worker fatalities in 2015 with 60 deaths. Of all Australian worker fatalities from 2013 to 2015, four per cent were the result of contact with electricity.

“All workers owe it to themselves, their family and workmates to ensure safe work practices are always front of mind,” David said. “Familiarise yourself with the latest SafeWork NSW Codes of Practice, and particularly the ‘*Managing electrical risks in the workplace*’ section which can be viewed at www.safework.nsw.gov.au.”

Construction workers are advised to complete a safety assessment prior to commencing works to identify risks and implement controls for potential electrical hazards.

“To protect against potential contact with electricity, assign a competent safety observer to each work team when moving, erecting or dismantling scaffolding near overhead powerlines,” David said.

“When digging or excavating, ensure you know the location of all underground powerlines by getting in touch with the free national referral service Dial Before You Dig at www.1100.com.au.”

If equipment does contact the electricity network, remain at least eight metres away, treat all powerlines as ‘live’ and call Essential Energy immediately on **13 20 80**. If the situation is life-threatening, call Triple-0 (000).

Media contact: Simone Plews, Corporate Media Manager
02 6588 6733 or 0457 514 993

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