

What should I do before starting work?

Apply the **SAFE** approach: Contact with underground or overhead powerlines, causing damage or injury can be avoided if potential hazards are identified before commencing activities on a work site.

To keep safe, follow these easy steps before commencing work:

1. **Spot** any hazards – they may not be obvious, consider the work to be done
2. **Assess** the risks from these hazards. What are the possible outcomes?
3. **Fix** the problem so it is safe to commence work.
4. **Evaluate** the effectiveness of the solutions you have put in place - do they work?

Spot the hazards: look for and find all electricity

- Know the location of overhead and underground powerlines in the area
- Ensure required minimum safe approach distances between machinery and lines are maintained. See Essential Energy's fact sheet 'Work near overhead powerlines' for details on safe approach distances.



Assess the risks: what could go wrong

You need to assess the potential risks of working close to any electrical hazard so as to identify and put in place the appropriate control measures to prevent any hazards (including work practices and procedures) which may have the potential to harm the health or safety of a person. Hazards can be created from reduced clearances from sag, sway and visibility of powerlines.

Fix the problem: ensure it can't go wrong

- Ensure required minimum approach distances are maintained. This is the amount of space required between machinery and anything held by a person and the powerlines in order to prevent electricity arcing to you or the machinery
- Assign a competent safety observer to each work team to guide machinery movements near overhead powerlines, in order to warn the person/operator of unsafe conditions and ensure that minimum safety approach distances are maintained
- Always lower machinery to the transport position when relocating

- Install appropriate signage to warn workers of the presence of overhead and underground powerlines
- Ensure maintenance of machinery and loading/unloading activities are carried out well away from powerlines.

Evaluate the effectiveness of the controls: determine if the control measures work

The last step is to monitor and review the changes, to verify the success of the control measures that have been implemented and to reveal any new hazards.

For more information

Essential Energy's Public Safety team is available to facilitate Electrical Awareness sessions and discuss any questions relating to electrical safety.

For more information on electrical safety please call Essential Energy:

General enquiries **13 23 91**

Power outages **13 20 80**

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Essential Energy recommends you familiarise yourself with the latest SafeWork NSW Code of Practice 'Work near Overhead Powerlines', which can be viewed at www.safework.nsw.gov.au or you can purchase a copy of the Code of Practice by contacting SafeWork NSW on **13 10 50**.

SAFETY FIRST:

- You can still be injured without directly contacting an overhead powerline, as electricity can arc across open spaces – so keep your distance!
- Be aware that the apparent height of powerlines will vary depending upon the angle which they are viewed.
- Always treat all powerlines as alive even though they may appear to be dead.

Be safe, because they need you

