

## Never Underestimate the Power of Electricity

According to the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), approximately 350 electrical-related fatalities occur each year.



Safety-conscious contractors understand the dangers associated with performing work near power lines and take the necessary precautions. Never underestimate the power of electricity.

Before doing any work on a job site, be sure to conduct a thorough survey that identifies any power lines, utility poles, guy wires, service drops and other power-related equipment.

For safety's sake, every power line should be treated as though it's energized. Electric shock can cause injury or even death.



Brooklyn, Conn. — The truck pictured above was being driven with the bed in an elevated position. The bed struck an energized 23,000-volt power line.

## Safety Tips for Contractors Working Near Power Lines

### For More Information

To learn more, contact Eversource at:

Connecticut: **888-544-4826**

Eastern Massachusetts: **888-633-3797**

New Hampshire: **800-362-7764**

Western Massachusetts: **800-880-2433**

Visit [eversource.com](http://eversource.com) for videos and other safety information.

Look out for overhead and underground power lines!

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Use tape, signs or barricades to keep yourself and your equipment a safe distance from overhead lines. Consult the chart below for Occupational Safety & Health Administration (OSHA) minimum safe working distances.

## Overhead Hazards

If you are working on a hoisting/rigging, excavating, grading, or construction project within an electric line right-of-way, keep in mind the risks associated with overhead high-voltage power lines. Non-electric utility crane operators must contact Eversource to verify voltage.

The following tips can help keep you safe while working within a right-of-way:

- > **Be aware of overhead power lines** and equipment, and maintain safe working distances from energized parts.
- > **Use extreme care** with ladders and scaffolding.
- > **Establish a clearance boundary** around power lines before work begins.
- > **Pay attention to line clearance distances.** The height above ground can vary, based on power load.
- > **Use a spotter** when operating heavy equipment.
- > **Call Eversource** if unsure about line voltage rating and safe work distances from power lines and equipment.
- > **Comply with all OSHA requirements** and applicable state and federal safety regulations, including OSHA's crane standard.

### OSHA Minimum Safe Working Distances from Exposed Energized Parts (including overhead lines) for Non-Qualified Personnel

Nominal Voltage Phase-to-Phase (V)	Minimum Working Distance in Feet
0 to 50,000	10
Over 50,000 to 200,000	15
Over 200,000 to 345,000	20

As voltage increases, the need for greater clearance from the power source also increases. Crane distances could be greater. Consult OSHA regulations for further workplace safety guidance at [www.osha.gov](http://www.osha.gov).

**For assistance with determining voltage and safe working distances, please contact Eversource.**

## Underground Hazards

Practice safe excavations. Contractors must be aware of underground cables and utilities. The existence and locations of underground hazards can be determined by calling 8-1-1 or "Dig Safe" at 888-344-7233 in Massachusetts and New Hampshire, and "Call Before You Dig" at 800-922-4455 in Connecticut.

If you don't call and you hit an underground line, you could be hurt or killed. You may also be held liable for damages.

If an underground power line is exposed or damaged, the site should be secured and a safe distance maintained. Once safety precautions have been taken, please call Eversource at the appropriate number listed on the back.

## Transmission Counterpoise Wire Q&A

Contractors must be aware of underground wires called "counterpoise wires." The existence and locations of these wires can be determined by calling Eversource and asking for the Transmission Line Department prior to starting work near transmission lines.

### Q. What is a counterpoise wire?

A. A counterpoise wire is a small-gauge wire (No. 2) that is generally buried at a depth of 8 to 24", and runs parallel to and along the centerline of the transmission line. It is used as a means of dissipating stray currents, such as lightning strikes.

### Q. What is the danger if a counterpoise wire is damaged or severed?

A. Counterpoise wires are not energized at power line voltage, but may still be energized. A severed counterpoise wire can also cause power reliability issues if it is too damaged to dissipate stray currents.



### Q. What should a contractor do if any type of wire is exposed or damaged?

- A. Follow these steps to ensure your safety:
- > Do NOT attempt to reconnect the wire.
  - > Call Eversource and describe to a Transmission Department Representative where the severed or exposed counterpoise is located and request a site review.
  - > Stake or flag the position of the break to facilitate a quick repair.
  - > Please note that there will be no billing to the contractor or landowner for reconnection of severed counterpoise wire.