



## Worker Killed When Dump Truck Hits Power Line

### The Incident

On February 4, 2003, a 19 year-old male worker was electrocuted while helping to unload a 42-foot tractor-trailer during a delivery of salt. Apparently, some of the salt had gotten stuck in the bed of the truck. When the truck's operator raised the bed in an attempt to dislodge the salt, the top of the trailer struck a 7,200 volt powerline. The worker was apparently holding onto the back of the trailer when it struck the powerline.



Photo credit: Skowhegan Police Dept.

### Regulations and Standards

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) addresses electrical safety in the General Industry Safety and Health Standards, 29 CFR 1910 Subpart S and the Construction Safety and Health Standards, 29 CFR 1926 Subpart K.

29 CFR 1910.333 (c)(3): Overhead lines. If work is to be performed near overhead lines, the lines shall be de-energized and grounded.

29 CFR 1926.416(a)(1): Employees must not work so close to any electric power circuit that they could come in contact with it.

### Fatality Data

Since 1992, the Federal Bureau of Labor Statistics has recorded 1,310 cases of work-related fatalities due to contact with overhead powerlines. Of these, 39 involved trucks making contact with overhead powerlines. Twenty-six of the 39 fatalities were truck drivers. (Census of Fatal Occupational Injury Program)

### Recommendations

1. Dump truck drivers and attendants should conduct a job hazard assessment before starting any work, particularly working near overhead powerlines. Once potential hazards are identified, control measures, such as monitoring the clearance between the powerline and the truck bed, should be taken.
2. Employers should contact the local utility company to de-energize or insulate the powerline when circumstances offer no alternatives when operating a dump truck in close proximity to an overhead powerline.
3. Truck drivers should maintain visual contact and good communication with workers and attendants during loading and unloading operations.
4. As a general safety work practice, it is recommended that a distance of 10 feet or more be maintained between powerlines and any conductive material or vehicle. For more information on using vehicular and mechanical equipment around powerlines, review OSHA Standards 1910.333(c)(3) (iii).