

Media Release

Energy Safe Victoria

29 April, 2022

Daily powerline-related incidents prompt critical warning from ESV

Worrying statistics highlighting close to daily powerline-related incidents across the state have prompted Energy Safe Victoria (ESV) to again call for machinery operators to be more aware of their surroundings.

For more than a decade, ESV's *Look Up and Live* campaign has aimed to educate the community on the dangers of vehicles, such as tipper trucks, augers, cranes and tractors operating too close to powerlines with the threat of electrical shock or a fatal electrocution, a very real risk.

Unfortunately, Victorians are still not heeding this message with 58 powerline-related incidents reported across Victoria during the first two months of 2022. This includes one serious injury and one fatality involving a man attempting to trim a tree in the front yard of a Malvern East property in February.

In 2021, the energy safety regulator reported 214 incidents, 34 of which involved high voltage lines and four causing serious injury. Of that 214, a total of 141 involved overhead powerlines and 73 underground.

Between late April and early May last year, five people were hospitalised after four incidents occurred within three weeks of each other across regional Victoria. And in late 2020, a farmworker was killed when his telehandler came into contact with overhead powerlines in Gerang Gerung, in the state's north-west.

Look Up and Live also reminds Victorians that if a piece of machinery does hit powerlines and you are inside the vehicle, to stay inside. If you're not inside the vehicle, keep at least eight metres away, as you can still be shocked when approaching the vehicle.

Below are a few simple safety tips to avoid an incident occurring:

- Understanding No Go Zones, rules and distances for safety clearances near overhead powerlines.
- Ensure an ESV-registered spotter is on hand when working near overhead powerlines.
- Display *Look up and live* stickers on any machinery or equipment, which is raised overhead.
- Remember that powerlines are more difficult to see at dawn and dusk and that electricity can jump gaps.
- Be extra aware in rural areas as overhead powerlines are predominantly single conductor lines that are difficult to see and easy to forget.

For more information go to <https://esv.vic.gov.au/campaigns/look-up-and-live/>

ESV Commissioner and Chairperson Marnie Williams

"All of these incidents could have been avoided if Victorians had taken the extra time and vigilance to better understand their surroundings."

"Unfortunately, for many, distractions, the need to get things done quickly and just simple unpreparedness has cost Victorians their lives."

"It's so easy to forget that the simple act of looking up before you start work, could save your life or the life of a co-worker."

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