

# Media Release

Energy Safe Victoria

10 May, 2022

## ESV repeats powerline safety message following serious Bendigo incident

Energy Safe Victoria (ESV) is investigating an incident involving a Kinypanial farmer who was airlifted to hospital yesterday after an agricultural sprayer made contact with overhead high voltage powerlines.

The energy safety regulator is pleading with Victorians to look up and be aware of their surroundings following the incident, northwest of Bendigo, which occurred at around 5pm. The 67-year-old man is currently in a non-critical condition suffering burns to his foot. The experienced farmer received the electric shock after he jumped out of the sprayer cab and onto the ground.

For the past decade, ESV's Look Up and Live campaign, has warned machinery operators – especially farmers to be aware of their work environment and check for powerlines before work commences.

Last month ESV launched its 2022 Look Up and Live campaign, after 58 powerline-related incidents took place in January and February, including the death of a man in Malvern East in February.

In 2021, ESV also 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.

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.
- If machinery does hit powerlines, operators should stay inside the vehicle and call for help.
- If it is not safe, for example in case of fire, jump clear from the vehicle, keep legs and feet close together and landing both feet on the ground. Then shuffle with both feet staying close together to a distance more than 10m away. NEVER touch the vehicle and the ground at the same time.
- Bystanders and spotters should also stay at least eight metres away, as they can still be shocked when approaching the vehicle.

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

### ESV Commissioner and Chairperson Marnie Williams

*"We are thinking about the farmer and his family and hope he's able to make a full recovery."*

*"Unfortunately, this incident could have been avoided if he'd been more aware of his surroundings before starting work."*

*"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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