

Tip truck Hitting Overhead Power Lines

Background

A contractor working for the City of Geelong hit overhead power lines at a VicRoads owned/shared stack site. The tip truck was delivering aggregate to the site for upcoming council re-sealing road works in the local area. When delivering the raised tray of the truck connected with an overhead high voltage power line, resulting in the truck's tyres being blown out and a related power surge causing an energy outage to over 2000 residences for approximately five hours.

Outcome

Fortunately, the truck driver was uninjured, given the real risk of electrocution from the 22,000 volt surge from the power lines. WorkSafe is investigating the incident. It is unknown if the driver had previously delivered to the site or what OH&S information/training had been provided before undertaking the task.

Always be aware of workplace hazards including ones above you, i.e. power lines.

Corrective Actions

Some possible corrective measures relating to this incident could include but are not limited to the provision/implementation of:

- Display prominent warning signs relating to existence of power lines in the vicinity;
- Ensure employees, contractors and sub-contractors are aware of the "No Go Zone" in relation to working near power lines. No work inside three meters of a power line (above, below and both sides);
- Ensure all construction materials, motor vehicles and mobile plant are operated and stored well away from power lines;
- Ensure all relevant SWMS for outdoor tasks/activities have documented the hazards and related risk control measures associated with power lines;
- Consider the use of a trained/competent spotter;
- Regular toolbox meetings re-iterating the importance of overhead power lines hazards;
- Mandatory site induction and the completion of a Construction Induction/White/Red Card course which includes instruction on "No Go Zones" along with "Three Points of Contact" etc; and
- Investigate the possible use of object/proximity detector sensor systems fitted to the lip of the front of the tray in tandem with a suitable camera and cabin based screen to identify possible overhead dangers.