



WATFORD TRAGEDY UNDERSCORES NEED FOR ELECTRICAL SAFETY VIGILANCE

ESA assisting in investigation of powerline incident that left one dead and three seriously injured

Mississauga, Ont., Aug. 2, 2013 - The death of one worker and injuries sustained by five others yesterday near Watford, Ont. underscores the need for everyone to be aware of the risks posed by electrical equipment. The tragedy occurred when a large outdoor tent the workers were setting up for a wedding contacted an overhead powerline.

“Our thoughts go out to the family of the victim, to the five men hurt in this incident, and to everyone else affected by this tragedy,” said Doug Crawford, Chief Public Safety Officer with the Electrical Safety Authority (ESA). “It’s critically important to be aware of the location of powerlines when erecting flag or tent poles, antennae or other tall equipment. We want everyone in Ontario to remember whether you’re at work, at home or at play, it’s essential to always look up, look out and locate powerlines to stay safe.”

Crawford added that an ESA inspector attended the scene last evening and ESA continues to be engaged with other authorities including the Ministry of Labour in looking into the circumstances of this incident.

Consider these sobering statistics: Over the past decade, 28 Ontarians have died and 63 have sustained critical or serious injuries after contact with live overhead powerlines—and, sadly, each of these incidents could have been prevented. Thirty-nine per cent of all electrical-related fatalities in Ontario were related to contact with overhead powerlines over the same period.

ESA urges everyone to remember some basic powerline safety tips:

At work:

- Remove or prepare for hazards before beginning any job by conducting a full hazard assessment of the site;
- Manage worksites carefully, with pre-work checklists for workers on roofs, scaffolding or any other aerial work ;
- Construction sites should always have a signaller or spotter to make sure heavy equipment, including dump trucks and cranes, are well away from powerlines;
- When using any equipment, not only heavy machinery, but also things such as ladders, be aware of powerlines and stay clear of them;
- In the event of an incident, assess the surrounding area for electrical hazards before assisting an injured person;
- For more life-saving tips, watch the ESA’s powerline safety video at <http://youtu.be/uAwaPmAwPL8> or visit www.esasafe.com.

In your community:

- Never fly kites or climb trees around powerlines, and don't play on any green metal boxes on lawns or in fields;
- If you ever see a downed powerline, stay well back, and call 911 immediately;
- Should a powerline fall on your vehicle, stay inside until help arrives. Never get out;
- For more life-saving tips, visit: www.esasafe.com.

At home:

- Look out for powerlines when cleaning eavestroughs or pruning trees;
- Carry ladders horizontally, never vertically, and check for overhead powerlines before putting them up;
- When digging in your yard or for fence posts or deck supports, call your local utility company to check for and mark underground cables;
- Always stay at least three metres (10 feet) away from any overhead powerline. This includes tools, ladders and equipment;
- For any questions or concerns regarding overhead or underground powerlines, contact your local electrical utility;
- Hire professionals to trim trees around powerlines on private property;
- For other life-saving tips, visit: www.esasafe.com.

About the Electrical Safety Authority (ESA)

Established in 1999 as a self-sustaining, not-for-profit corporation, the Electrical Safety Authority's mission is to improve electrical safety for the well-being of the people of Ontario. The overall vision of the ESA is to achieve zero electrical accidents, injuries and fatalities across Ontario. More information on the Electrical Safety Authority can be found on its website, www.esasafe.com, through Twitter @HomeandSafety and www.facebook.com/electricalsafetyauthority.

To arrange an interview with Doug Crawford, Chief Public Safety Officer with the Electrical Safety Authority, please contact Kara Fraser at 905-712-5387.