



## **Oakville teenager's serious electric shock a stark reminder of need to Look Up and Look Out for powerlines**

*The Electrical Safety Authority's Chief Public Safety Officer asks parents to remind their children of the danger of playing near powerlines and other electrical equipment*

Mississauga, Ontario /July 18, 2013 — An Oakville teen's serious electric shock from contacting a powerline while climbing a tree yesterday stands as a stark reminder of the need for everyone to be aware of overhead powerlines at home, at work and at play.

"Our thoughts are with the young man and his family in the wake of yesterday's tragic event," says Doug Crawford, Chief Public Safety Officer with the Electrical Safety Authority, noting an investigation of the incident is currently underway. "Incidents like these can be prevented by making our kids aware of the real danger of playing near powerlines and other electrical equipment. We're asking parents to take a moment today to remind their children to look up and look out for overhead powerlines, and if they see any, to find a safer place to play."

Over the past decade, 63 Ontarians sustained critical or serious injuries and 28 have died after contact with live powerlines—and, sadly, all of those deaths could have been prevented.

Consider these statistics:

- Fifty-four per cent of non-occupational electrical-related deaths happen during recreation and repair and maintenance activities around the home or in public spaces.
- Seventy-three per cent of known incidents involving electrical contact occur in the construction sector, where heavy equipment, such as cranes and dump trucks, can hit powerlines on busy job sites if there are no dedicated spotters;
- More than 60 per cent of the probable causes of job-related electrical fatalities can be attributed to improper procedure—a number that rises to 69 per cent when combined with human error;

"The Electrical Safety Authority's goal is to eliminate *every* injury and death in Ontario related to electricity," says Crawford. "But we can't do it alone—we need everyone to remember to look up, look out, and locate—and never take safety for granted."

To keep safe, ESA urges everyone to remember some basic powerline safety tips:

### **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.powerlinesafety.ca](http://www.powerlinesafety.ca).

**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 3 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.powerlinesafety.ca](http://www.powerlinesafety.ca).

**At 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;
- Remove or prepare for hazards before beginning any job by conducting a hazard assessment of the site;
- Manage worksites carefully, with pre-work checklists for workers on roofs, scaffolding or any other aerial work ;
- When using any equipment, not only heavy machinery, but also things like ladders, be aware of powerlines and stay clear of them;
- For more life-saving tips, watch the Electrical Safety Authority's video, <http://youtu.be/uAwaPmAwPL8> or visit [www.powerlinesafety.ca](http://www.powerlinesafety.ca).

**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](http://www.esasafe.com), through Twitter @HomeandSafety and [www.facebook.com/electricalsafetyauthority](http://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.