



## **PETERBOROUGH MAN’S ELECTROCUTION A STARK REMINDER OF LETHAL POWER OF OVERHEAD POWERLINES**

*The Electrical Safety Authority’s Chief Public Safety Officer reminds Ontarians to look up and look out for overhead wires when working in the yard*

Mississauga, ON – April 24, 2017 — A Peterborough man’s death last week after contacting a powerline while doing yardwork is a stark reminder of the need for everyone to be aware of overhead wires at home, at work and at play.

“Our thoughts are with the man and his family in the wake of last week’s tragic event,” says Scott Saint, Chief Public Safety Officer with the Electrical Safety Authority. “Incidents like these can be prevented by making everyone aware of the real danger of working around powerlines and other electrical equipment.”

Forty-seven Ontarians sustained critical or serious injuries over a 10-year span in Ontario, and 23 died after contact with energized powerlines. Sadly, all of those deaths could have been prevented, and last week’s tragic event has added another fatality to those numbers.

As winter finally recedes and homeowners begin their annual home maintenance ritual of repairing winter damage, pruning trees and cleaning out eavestroughs, many will find themselves in close quarters with a silent and potential deadly hazard: powerlines. In fact, fifty-four per cent of electrical-related deaths among the public happened during recreation and repair and maintenance activities around the home or in public spaces.

“The Electrical Safety Authority’s vision is an Ontario where people can live, work and play safe from electrical harm,” says Saint. “But we can’t fulfill this vision alone. We need everyone to remember to look up, look out, and locate powerlines—and never take safety for granted.”

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

### **At home:**

1. Before starting any outdoor job, first look up, look out and locate the powerlines. Then keep track of where they are as you move around so you’re always mindful of them.
2. Stay back three metres from all powerlines – that means you as well as any tools such as ladders or pruners. Coming too close to the wires can cause electricity to jump (or “arc”) to you or your tools.
3. Never attach, drape or brace anything on a powerline. And never grab a line for balance when working at heights.
4. Carry ladders, pruners and other long equipment horizontally, not vertically, because they could come into contact or attract arcing from an overhead line.

5. Plant trees away from overhead powerlines and call Ontario One Call before you dig to ensure underground cables and other utility equipment are located and marked. If existing trees have grown into or close to powerlines, contact a trained utility arborist or your local electric utility to have the tree safely trimmed.

**At work:**

1. Look up, look out and identify all powerlines on site and make sure people and equipment stay at least three metres away to prevent an incident. Electricity can jump to you or your equipment if you're too close to a powerline.

2. Drivers of dump trucks and other high reach vehicles must get a signaller to ensure that equipment doesn't come within three metres of overhead powerlines.

3. Ensure that dump trucks on site drop their box after dropping off the load. It's good practice to have a raised box indicator installed in the truck to remind the driver that the box is raised.

4. Stay alert! Many incidents happen at the end of the day when workers are tired or rushing to finish a job.

5. If wires fall down on the truck or the ground, always assume they are still energized. Stay in the vehicle, call 911 and keep everyone back. Only the local utility worker on-site can confirm when the power is off and tell you when it's safe to exit the vehicle.

**About the Electrical Safety Authority**

The Electrical Safety Authority's (ESA) role is to enhance public electrical safety in Ontario. As an administrative authority acting on behalf of the Government of Ontario, ESA is responsible for administering specific regulations related to the Ontario Electrical Safety Code, the licensing of Electrical Contractors and Master Electricians, electricity distribution system safety, and electrical product safety. ESA works extensively with stakeholders throughout the province on education, training and promotion to foster electrical safety.

More information on the Electrical Safety Authority can be found at [www.esasafe.com](http://www.esasafe.com), through Twitter @homeandsafety and on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/ElectricalSafetyAuthority](http://www.facebook.com/ElectricalSafetyAuthority).

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