



POWERLINE SAFETY BEGINS WITH YOU

The Electrical Safety Authority kicks off Ontario's first-ever Powerline Safety Week with an important life-saving message

Mississauga, Ontario /May 7, 2013/ – **Look up, look out and locate!** The Electrical Safety Authority urges all Ontario residents to remember this simple phrase as it kicks off the province's first-ever Powerline Safety Week in partnership with local electrical distribution companies. Over the past decade, 28 Ontarians have died due to contact with live powerlines—and, sadly, most of those deaths could have been prevented.

"While we've made some progress in reducing overall electrical fatalities in Ontario, there's still work to be done," says Doug Crawford, Chief Public Safety Officer with the Electrical Safety Authority. "We have an obligation to work together to protect our families, our communities, our co-workers and ourselves."

Consider these statistics:

- 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;
- Over 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;
- Fifty-four per cent of non-occupational electrical-related fatalities happen during recreation and repair and maintenance activities around the home or in public spaces.

"Our ongoing focus, and the intent of Powerline Safety Week, is to put electrical safety top of mind with everyone so these kinds of incidents drop further," says Crawford. "We can't be complacent. We all have an ongoing role to play."

The Electrical Safety Authority has joined forces with industry partners and Ontario local electricity distributors on a number of education and awareness activities during Powerline Safety Week, which runs from May 13 to 19. To keep safe, they urge everyone to remember some basic powerline safety tips:

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 new video, <http://youtu.be/uAwaPmAwPL8> or visit powerline.safety.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 regarding overhead or underground powerlines contact your local electrical utility;
- For other life-saving tips, visit: www.powerlinesafety.ca.

In your community:

- Never play with or around powerlines or other electrical equipment, including 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.

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

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 Kara Fraser at 905-712-5387.