



Look Up. Keep Back. Call Ahead.

Power line safety campaign aimed at contractors and heavy equipment operators

July 26, 2011 – Newfoundland and Labrador Hydro is launching a power line safety campaign to address concerns surrounding the number of line contacts that have occurred in recent years.

Since 2007, Hydro has recorded over 40 electrical contacts. The majority of these have involved contractors and operators using large equipment such as excavators, dump trucks, booms, cranes, tractors and trailers.

“Our priority is to ensure the safety of our employees, contractors and the general public. Contact with power lines is extremely dangerous and can be fatal,” said Jim Haynes, Hydro’s Vice President of Regulated Operations. “We need all contractors and heavy equipment operators to be aware of the dangers associated with electricity and to take the appropriate precautions when working around power lines. We ask them to look up, keep back and call ahead to stay safe around power lines.”

Haynes says that by taking the time to plan carefully and to identify overhead and underground power lines before you start work is critical to preventing injuries.

Newfoundland Power shares concern over the number of power line contacts seen over the past number of years. They have reported almost 100 incidents involving power line contacts in the past 5 years. Gary Smith, Newfoundland Power’s Vice President of Customer Operations and Engineering, says pre-job planning is integral for contractors and heavy equipment operators. “We caution that particular attention must be paid to situations that could bring people in proximity to energized power lines and/or electrical equipment,” said Smith.

Specific requirements for maintaining clearances and providing worker training are mandated by the province’s Occupational Health and Safety Regulations. Special permits are required when working near energized power lines. Operators of equipment with the capability of contacting overhead or underground power lines must attend an approved “Power Line Hazards” safety course.



Power line contacts have also involved members of the general public engaged in construction projects around the home and tree trimming. “Anyone working in close proximity to power lines must call their utility provider to ensure they are within a safe working distance,” explains Haynes. “Our employees will work with you to ensure your safety and ensure all proper permits are in place. We cannot emphasize enough the importance of planning your work carefully when near power lines.”

Hydro and Newfoundland Power want to remind contractors and the general public that working around electricity requires their complete attention. Accidents can be prevented with proper planning, worksite evaluation and adhering to safe distances. For more information on working safely around electrical equipment, visit **HydroSafety.ca** (1.888.737.1296) or **www.newfoundlandpower.com** (1.800.663.2802).

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