

Mine Safety Agency Issues ‘Close Call Alert’ Related to Surface Power Lines

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The ***Mine Safety and Health Administration*** has issued a “close call alert” after a tractor trailer contacted an overhead ground wire after dumping a load of gravel, causing significant damage, but no injuries.

The agency said in the alert that because the tractor trailer did not maintain the recommended 10 feet of clearance between the equipment and the power lines, after contact, the wire pulled and snapped a ground wire on an adjacent power pole. It said the second wire caused the energized 13,800-volt wires to arc and trip the power. MSHA said there was a possibility of an electrocution.

MSHA provided the following best practices:

- Ensure that high-voltage power lines are de-energized before operating equipment within 10 feet of them.
- Be aware of the location of overhead power lines and avoid the risk of electrocution by choosing a route for equipment that avoids potential contact.
- Contact the local power company if an incident occurs.
- Remember that some equipment may have a higher profile during transport.
- If a tractor comes in contact with power lines, remain in the tractor and have someone contact the power company to shut off the power.
- If a tractor contacts power lines and a fire erupts, exit from the tractor and get away as far as possible. Never allow any part of a body to touch both the equipment and the ground at the same time.

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