

# Safety and health alert

## 22/99 Dangers of working near overhead power lines

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### Incident

A building construction labourer received severe burns to his face and arms while performing housekeeping duties. During the process of cleaning the area a length of metal fascia (8.5 metres long) inadvertently came into contact with the high voltage power lines (66 kV) located adjacent to the scaffolding.

The power supply lines were not insulated due to the high voltage however the scaffolding in the vicinity of the lines had been sheeted with plywood in accordance with the supply authority's requirements to prevent contact whilst work within the site was in progress. The labourer pushed one end of the fascia out over the top of the plywood perimeter sheeting in an attempt to relocate the fascia to a level below.

### Factors

1. The person was not instructed with regard to the close proximity of the high voltage power lines.
2. No signs warning of the hazard were displayed to warn persons working in the area.

### Recommendations

1. Ensure warning signs appropriate to the hazard are displayed to warn persons working in or entering the area.
2. Ensure personnel are provided with such information, instruction and supervision to enable them to perform their duties in such a manner that they are not exposed to a hazard.
3. Employers or self-employed persons must ensure, where practicable, no plant or equipment is used in such a manner that the plant or equipment could come into contact with overhead electrical wires. (Arrangements must be made with the supply authority to ensure compliance with the authority's requirements, before commencing work.)
4. Pay particular attention to the storage of materials and the handling that may be required when performing housekeeping work.

### Further Information

Further information can be obtained from the WorkSafe internet site [www.worksafe.wa.gov.au](http://www.worksafe.wa.gov.au), or by contacting customer service on 1300 307 877 or email: [safety@docep.wa.gov.au](mailto:safety@docep.wa.gov.au).

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