

Safety and health alert

13/96 Dogman receives electric shock

Incident

A worker received severe electrical burns while controlling a steel beam being moved by a mobile crane.

The incident occurred during the construction of a steel-framed building at Welshpool in September 1995. A BHB mobile crane was transporting a steel beam under a 22kV power line while the worker guided the beam by hand around a stockpile of road base. The steel beam was 12 metres long, and was being carried at a height of approximately one metre from the ground. While the beam was being moved around the road base, the end of the beam came into contact with a poorly maintained fire hydrant located directly beneath the 22kV power lines. This contact knocked the valve from the hydrant, sending a spout of water onto the power lines. This created a path for the electrical current to flow down the water to the steel beam.

The result was that the worker received a severe electric shock, and the left rear tyre of the crane ruptured.

Factors

- A lack of maintenance to the fire hydrant.
- The fire hydrant was installed directly beneath the high-voltage power lines.
- The steel beam hitting the fire hydrant.

Recommendations

1. Owners of premises must ensure that emergency services are maintained.
2. Workers engaged in dogging must be constantly aware of the hazards around worksites while controlling a load.
3. This incident highlights yet again the benefits of using rope tag lines. [Significant Incident Summary 27/1995](#) refers.

Further Information

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

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