

Safety Alert

Issue # 02-2026

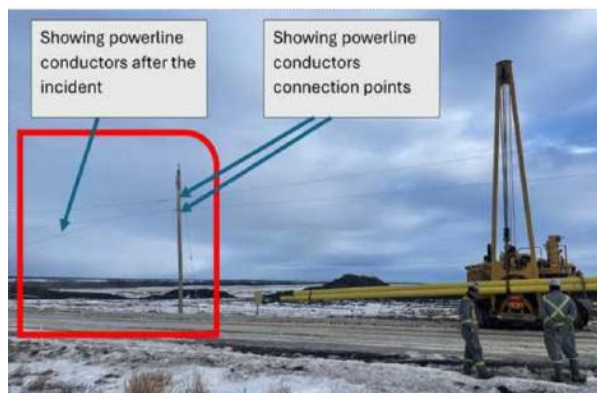
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Sideboom Powerline Strike Potentially Serious Incident

What Happened?

A tracked sideboom was in the process of relocating three lengths of pipe on a rural road. Three overhead powerlines were in the path, two of which were identified as the task began. After successfully crossing the first line, the boom contacted a second line that was not identified and parted an energized 25kV powerline.

No injuries occurred; this incident was considered to have a serious injury or fatality (SIF) potential due to the presence of electrical energy.



Why Did it Happen?

- Due to conditions, the contractor's supervisor moved the pipelayer from the right-of-way and designated travel path to the public roadway.
- The change in route bypassed physical barriers intended to prevent overhead line contact.

- The Field Level Hazard Assessment (FLHA) conducted prior to beginning work was not fully complete.
- An updated FLHA was not completed when the work scope changed; the FLHA did not account for hazards of alternate routes.
- It was not identified that the change in route resulted in physical controls intended to prevent overhead line contact being absent.
- Two of three overhead lines were identified; however, the walkdown of the new route was not complete, resulting in one line being missed.
- Cloudy conditions resulted in overhead lines blending with skyline.
- The supervisor and sideboom operator were not adequately trained for their respective roles.

What Did They Learn?

- Engage with contractors to understand their supervisor competency programs.
- Verification of training and competency assessments are required for contract supervisors.
- The contractor's Construction Kick-off checklist was updated to include a requirement for the site supervisor to validate competency of their crews.
- Understand how site supervisors handle changes from planned work (i.e., Work as Imagined vs Work as Done).
- Revise how written programs address controlled and uncontrolled overhead line crossings.

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Ask Yourself and Your Crew:

- Could a similar incident happen at your site?
- How do we respond when scope shifts, even when perceived risk is low?
- Do we have a clear process for re-assessing risk when plans change?

Industry Resources

- Training | [Powerline Safety Awareness Online Course](#)
- Report | [Potentially Serious Incidents Summary 2019-2024 Data](#)

Submit Your Safety Alert

Help industry by sharing lessons learned from an incident. [Submit your Safety Alert](#).

Share and Collaborate

Energy Safety Canada (ESC) works collaboratively with industry to share information aimed at helping companies of all sizes improve safe work performance.

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