

Overhead power lines & visual safety indicators

Issue

Code of Practice: Work Near Overhead Power Lines (the Code) and the use of visual safety indicators to assist in raising awareness and define the limit of approach for cranes and when manoeuvring and operating mobile plant near energised overhead power lines.

Background

Clause 291 of the Work Health and Safety Regulation, 2011 defines ‘*High Risk Construction Work*’ and includes the following work activities:

(k) Work carried out on or near energised electrical installations or services

(o) Work carried out in an area at a workplace in which there is any movement of powered mobile plant

WorkCover has received enquiries from the Housing Industry Consultative Committee (HICC) regarding the interpretation of control measures for the separating of hazards when high risk construction work is carried out near energised low voltage overhead power lines at residential construction sites.

The issue in question relates to when eliminating the hazard is not an option, however controlling it is, via separation, what are the different types of control measures that can be used?

HICC have developed several control measures that have been trialed at numerous construction sites. The separation control measures that have been developed consist of installing non-conductive ‘visual safety indicators’, examples are shown in Appendix 1.

The visual safety indicators, incorporate bunting, warning signs and non-conducting poles, (e.g. heavy duty underground PVC conduit or similar non-conductive material), which indicate overhead power line hazards in the vicinity. The visual safety indicators are erected via the completion of a **written risk assessment** and only trained/authorised persons are to install this system via a completed safe work method statement.

WorkCover's position

Visual safety indicators are a practical method of providing electrical separation between workers and the electrical hazard that defines the limit of approach for cranes and mobile plant operating near low voltage overhead power lines. These measures are consistent with the practical guidance described in Chapter 4 of the Code.

Note: Visual safety indicators should not be considered as a replacement to the system that uses 'Tiger Tails' on energised low voltage power lines. Visual safety indicators should only be considered for low risk sites where the likelihood of a mobile plant getting in close proximity to overhead low voltage power lines is minimal, for example a delivery truck or other mobile plant not working permanently onsite.

Further information

The Work Health and Safety Act 2011 requires persons conducting a business or undertaking at a workplace to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that workers and other persons at a workplace are not exposed to risks arising from the business or undertaking and that all workers are adequately trained and supervised.

Clause 166 of the Work Health and Safety Regulation, 2011 places specific obligations on duty holders to identify reasonable foreseeable hazards associated with work near overhead power lines, including hazards associated with mobile plant and then manage risks accordingly.

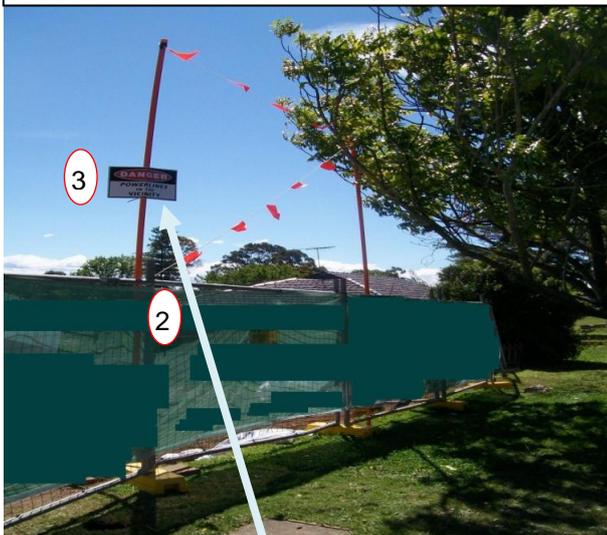
- Work near overhead power lines: Code of practice (catalogue no. 1394) available at workcover.nsw.gov.au
- Visit workcover.nsw.gov.au or phone **13 10 50**

Issued by: Acting State Coordinator – Electrical, Engineering Team - WorkCover NSW

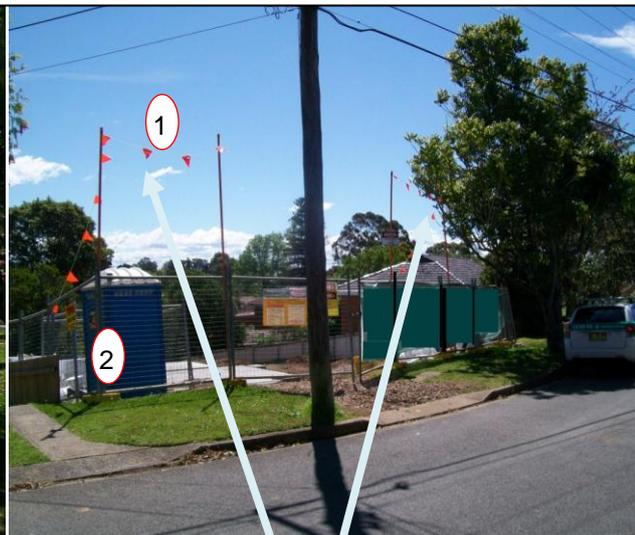
Appendix 1 – Examples of visual safety indicators installed at residential construction sites



1. Visual safety indicators (bunting) installed where deliveries occur on site
2. Non-conductive poles installed to support bunting. Do not introduce further hazards or risks – i.e. recommend fencing has return corners and couplings on each fence panel, which provide adequate mechanical support for the fence.
3. Relevant safety warning signage installed – see examples shown in Appendix 2.

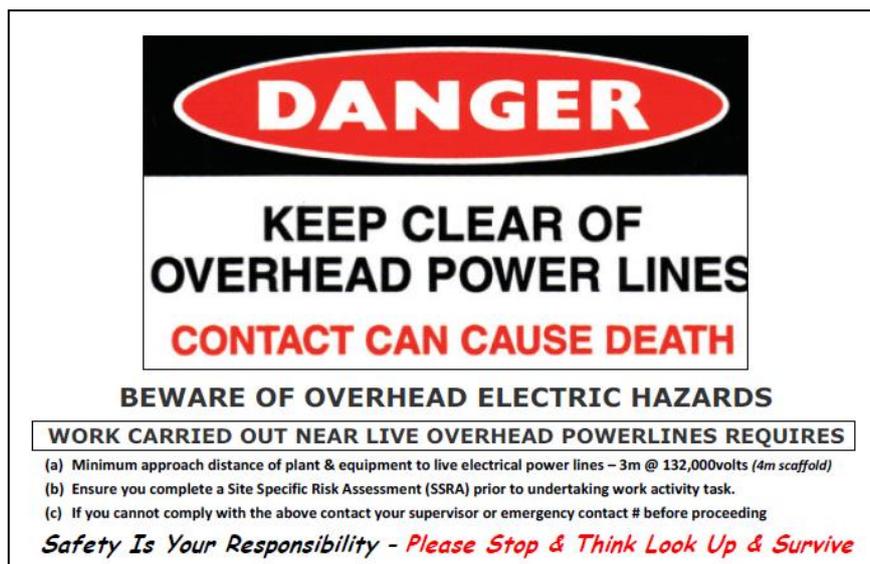


Warning signs installed add an additional visual indicator



Another alternate visual safety indicator installed either side of the delivery site.

Appendix 2 - Examples of relevant safety signage



Disclaimer

This bulletin contains some of your obligations under the work health and safety legislation that WorkCover NSW administers. To ensure you comply with your legal obligations you must refer to the WHS Regulation 2011, which can be accessed at www.workcover.nsw.gov.au when reading this publication you should always refer to the latest laws.

Information on the latest laws can be checked at www.legislation.nsw.gov.au