



Media release

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FARMERS, WORKERS AND TRUCK DRIVERS URGED TO ALWAYS “LOOK UP AND LIVE”

Local electricity distributor Powercor is working with the State's electricity safety regulator, Energy Safe Victoria (ESV), to help prevent deaths resulting from trucks, farming equipment and machinery hitting powerlines.

The warning is particularly relevant during the current season when bulk deliveries are being made to farms by large vehicles.

Three people have died in Victoria over recent months as a result of contacting overhead powerlines.

“All deaths are tragic but they can often be avoided if the presence of overhead powerlines is taken into account before starting work,” Powercor Regional Asset Manager Ian Gillingham said.

“Everyone involved must realise that while trucks are getting bigger - powerlines are staying at the same height.

“We do not want any more deaths or injuries resulting from trucks or other equipment hitting powerlines. With common sense and greater care, such incidents can be prevented. Victoria's comprehensive ‘No Go Zone’ rules and regulations must be observed at all times,” Mr Gillingham said.

Director of Energy Safety, Mr Paul Fearon, said that everyone involved in the delivery of materials to farms must exercise the appropriate duty of care.

“Farmers and truck drivers must always ‘Look Up And Live’. But farmers have the added responsibility of ensuring that the drop off point for deliveries is located well clear of powerlines. Similarly if truck drivers have concerns they should refuse to make the deliveries.

“If there is no alternative but to deliver materials near powerlines, then everybody involved has to be fully aware of the precautions required.

“Responsibility for safety must be extended beyond the farmyard. When taking orders, suppliers of farm materials should ascertain the delivery point on the farm for the load, the proximity of powerlines and what safety precautions must be in place.

“Unfortunately, experience shows that everyone – particularly truck drivers, property owners and farm workers - involved in the delivery of lime, fertiliser and other bulk material to farms is at risk from electrocution when trucks touch powerlines,” Mr Fearon said.

He said that hardly a day passed without an incident involving contact with overhead powerlines being reported to ESV.

“Fortunately, the vast majority of reported incidents do not result in death or injury. However, in most cases this is due to good luck rather than any conscious observation by people involved of the required safety precautions.”

Powercor and Energy Safe Victoria have introduced a number of initiatives to stress the “Look Up And Live” message to farmers and drivers.

A television commercial directly targeting truck drivers and farmers was screened throughout regional Victoria during February and March. Radio commercials have also been aired.

In a new initiative for 2010, a number of “Look Up And Live” billboard posters have been displayed at key sites in regional centres throughout Victoria.

“Look Up And Live” brochures, stickers and posters are available from ESV. The clear message from the brochure is: “Be Alert, Be Aware – Overhead Powerlines Are Always There.” One of the stickers, which can be placed on the inside of windscreens, also details the safe working distances which must be observed between trucks, machinery and power poles.

A safety DVD entitled “Look Up, Look Down – And Live” is available free of charge from ESV on 1800 800 158, 9203 9700 or info@esv.vic.gov.au

Further information:

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