

Fatal incident from work on energised overhead low voltage conductors

16 June 2025

Details of incident

On 22 May 2025, a distribution line worker working aloft in an elevating work platform (EWP) bucket, made contact with energised overhead low voltage (LV) conductors.



Image of the incident site taken by an IPART inspector after the incident.

It is understood that the line worker was in the process of reconnecting (bonding) three de-energised street lighting conductors across either side of the upper cross arm (see above photo). Two bonds had been completed, and the worker was in the process of completing the third bond when the incident occurred. The LV conductors on one side of the pole (foreground of the photo) were energised at the time of the incident.

The circumstances surrounding this incident are being reviewed by the network operator. The incident is also under investigation by SafeWork NSW. If there are findings that have broader industry application, we will communicate again.

Action required

Safety management systems

All network operators must have safety management systems in place and take all reasonable steps to ensure that the network is safe, this includes the safety of people working on the network.

Systems and control measures, therefore, must be in place for work on or near exposed live LV. Including that all work on an electrical network should be in accordance with the network operator's Electrical Safety Rules, and that staff working on or near exposed live LV (or acting as observers) should be trained in all relevant procedures and risk controls, and have had their competency assessed. Network operators should also have a process to provide assurance that critical risk controls are being effectively implemented.

Risk controls

Risk controls for live work may include, but are not limited to:

- the use of temporary insulation to all live exposed conductors that are within reach, other than the conductor being worked on.^a Note that temporary insulating covers must be adequately secured. Workers must also be insulated from earth potential.
- wearing LV insulating gloves with protective outer gloves.
- keeping uninsulated parts of the body separated from all conductors – both the exposed conductor being worked on and the adjacent conductors covered with temporary insulation.

Checking risk controls

Network operators should check their risk control measures regularly to make sure they are working as planned and being followed. Control measures should be reviewed to make sure they are effective, taking into consideration any changes in hazards or changes affecting the safe operation of the network, the nature of work and that the safe system is working as planned.

Further information

- The network operator has issued an ASP Safety Alert – 'Controls for work on or near exposed live low voltage' – to Accredited Service Providers. It is available on the network operator's [website](#).
- The network operator has also prepared a Toolbox Talk to remind workers of the controls that must be implemented when performing work on or near exposed live LV. This Toolbox has been shared with other industry partners and network operators.

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^a Temporary insulation may not be mandatory in some limited circumstances, for example, working on overhead mains from a position below the lowest live overhead conductor.