

Overhead lines: plan the whole movement

Talk 14 of 52 | Week 14 | Electrical

Leader: adapt this talk to today's electrical work and site procedures. See the educational-use and liability notice on page 2.

START THE CONVERSATION

A delivery arrives with long conduit while a lift is moving nearby. The overhead exposure includes the material and equipment, not just the person walking beneath the lines.

KEY TALKING POINTS

1. Identify overhead electrical lines during planning. Treat them as energized unless the responsible utility or authority has established otherwise. Do not judge their safety from appearance, covering, height, or the fact that another crew previously worked in the area.
2. Have the responsible person establish the required clearances and controls for the equipment, voltage, and activity. Different operations have different rules. This briefing deliberately does not substitute a single clearance distance for a task-specific determination.
3. Electrical job example: long conduit is carried horizontally, then raised to enter a rack. Trace the full movement from delivery through installation. The highest point of the load and its possible swing may differ greatly from its position while resting on the ground.
4. Coordinate truck routes, unloading positions, lift travel, and laydown areas before the delivery starts. Explain the restricted areas to drivers and new workers. A safe plan for a parked truck is incomplete if raising a bed or boom creates a different exposure.
5. Discuss what happens when the planned route is blocked. The crew should stop and seek another approved route instead of squeezing past a line or relying on someone to call out the remaining distance. Schedule pressure does not change the electrical hazard.
6. Keep the discussion grounded in today's work. Ask workers to point out the overhead hazard from a safe location and explain how their assigned activity could approach it. Include tools and long material carried by apprentices, not only large powered equipment.
7. Confirm how to report a downed line or equipment contact. Keep people away and call emergency services and the utility under the site plan. Do not approach the line or touch equipment involved in contact to attempt an improvised rescue.

ASK THE CREW

1. Which material movements could approach overhead lines?
2. Who approves changes to the delivery route?

BEFORE WORK STARTS

Review the route and established electrical clearances with the responsible supervisor before unloading or moving equipment.

OSHA SOURCES / FURTHER READING

OSHA: Construction electrical incidents

Attendance & action record

Overhead lines: plan the whole movement

Date: _____ Leader: _____

Company / jobsite: _____

Site hazards and controls discussed:

Follow-up action / responsible person / due date:

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Participant name	Signature / acknowledgment

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