

Case 26. 21-year-old male was electrocuted when the aluminum extension ladder he was repositioning to paint a residence contacted an overhead 4800-volt energized electrical line

A 21-year-old male was a member of a 2-person crew hired by the homeowner to paint their residence. Before the work was initiated, a company supervisor accompanied the victim and his coworker to the job site and instructed them in the steps necessary to complete the painting task. The supervisor did not discuss the overhead line location with the victim and his coworker. It was their first day of work. The incident occurred while the victim and coworker, both on aluminum ladders, were preparing the residence for painting. His coworker was power washing and the victim was scraping off the remaining paint. The ground was wet. The victim descended to the ground and was repositioning the ladder when it contacted the overhead electrical line that was 22 feet 8 inches from the ground. The ladder contacted the line and the victim became a path to ground. He broke contact with the ladder and dropped to the ground. The ladder fell back against the residence. Emergency response was contacted and the victim taken to a local hospital, where he was declared dead. The police report states that when the electrical company lowered the ladder to the ground it was noted that a rope was caught in the pulley, which would not allow the extension ladder to be raised or lowered.

MIOSHA issued the following “Serious” and “Regulatory” citations to the employer:

Serious:

1. Employees were not provided instructions regarding the operating procedures, hazards, and safe guards of tools and equipment in maintaining the required safe distances from transmission and distribution power lines. (General Rules, Part 1, Rule R408.40114(2)(b))
2. Employees were not given instruction in the recognition and avoidance of hazards associated with identifying power transmission and distribution lines in the proximity of the residential structure employees were working on painting. (General Rules, Part 1, Rule R408.40114(2)(d))
3. Employees were working within the 10-foot required clearance of a 4800-volt transmission and distribution power line that is 22 feet 8 inches above the ground and 64 inches from the building foundation horizontally while pressure washing and scraping the south gable of the residence. (General Rules, Part 1, Rule 115(4))
4. The employer did not provide adequate ladder training to employees to enable employees to recognize and avoid hazards associated with the use of aluminum ladders in the vicinity of transmission and distribution power lines. No instruction in the clearance distance required to be maintained from transmission and distribution power lines and an aluminum ladder. (Fixed and Portable Ladders, Part 11, Rule R408.41112(1))
5. Employees were using a 32-foot and a 24-foot aluminum extension ladder within the minimum clearance distance of 20 feet to a 4800-volt transmission and distribution power line that is 22 feet 8 inches above the ground and 64 inches

from the building foundation horizontally. (Fixed and Portable Ladders, Part 11, Rule R408.41124(7))

Regulatory:

1. The 2002 and 2003 OSHA Form 300 Log of Work-Related Injuries and Illness were not properly maintained. (Administrative Rule R408.22109, Recording Criteria, Rule 1109(1))