

**Case 236. 36-year-old male foreman for a tree trimming service was electrocuted when he contacted a live, 4,800-volt power line that had fallen to the ground.**

A 36-year-old male foreman for a tree trimming service was electrocuted when he contacted a live, 4,800-volt power line that had fallen to the ground. The decedent and his coworker were dispatched to the site to clear a path for the electric company to perform repairs. The 4,800-volt line and its neutral had fallen due to a damaged tree that had fallen on it during a wind storm. The decedent and his coworker conducted a job briefing after assessing the area. The decedent used the chain saw to cut up the downed tree. The workers pulled the neutral from under the tree and rolled it up next to a pole located approximately 15 feet away. The decedent indicated to his coworker he believed the primary line was dead and grabbed the line with both hands. He was not wearing protective gloves. The ground was wet. His coworker ran to the work truck and called for emergency response. The coworker was instructed to stay away from the decedent. He took a fire extinguisher from the truck and attempted to use it from a distance without success. Emergency response arrived and placed a call to the electric company to disconnect the power to the live line.

The MIOSHA General Industry Safety and Health Division issued the following Serious citation to the employer at the conclusion of its investigation.

**TREE TRIMMING AND REMOVAL, PART 53, RULE 5321(1)**

Ensure that an electric conductor or communication line shall be considered energized unless the systems utility or owner indicates otherwise and they have visibly grounded the conductor or line.

Employees grabbed a down power line without verifying that it was de-energized.