

Case 487. A 57-year-old landscaping firm truck driver was electrocuted when he touched an energized conductor while standing next to his truck.

A 57-year-old male landscaping firm truck driver was electrocuted when he touched an energized conductor while standing next to his truck. The decedent had just delivered a load of mulch and was driving away from the delivery point with the dump truck bed fully elevated. The elevated bed contacted an overhead service line that had (2) 110 V AC lines/220 V AC total electrical voltage. The decedent attempted to free his truck by lowering the bed to approximately 30 degrees and driving backward approximately 10 feet. This action caused the pole securing the service line to fall onto a nearby fence and the pole's 4,800 V AC primary electrical line to break and fall onto the truck bed. Both the service line and the primary electrical line were still energized; the lines arced and smoked when they contacted the metal parts of the truck. The decedent removed the metal head of a sledge hammer and, while standing on the passenger side of the truck, used the sledge hammer's wooden handle to manually push the service line off of the cab of the truck. He successfully moved the line towards the hood but not off the truck. He dropped the wooden handle and walked to the driver's side of the truck where he contacted the energized conductor (either the truck or an energized line). He was declared dead at the scene; he had electrical burns on his right arm and left hand and the glove on his left hand.

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

Serious: SAFETY-RELATED WORK PRACTICES, GI PART 40:

- RULE 408.14005(5): When an unqualified person is working on the ground in the vicinity of overhead lines, the person shall not bring any conductive object closer to unguarded, energized overhead lines than the distances specified in subrule (4) of this rule. For voltages that are normally encountered with overhead power lines, objects which do not have an insulating rating for the voltage involved are considered to be conductive.

Minimum approach distances from overhead power lines were not maintained when the operator of the Peterbilt #18 dump truck struck the overhead lines with the raised dump bed of the dump truck, pulling them down and then attempted to manually remove the energized lines by hand and with the wooden handle of hammer, resulting in an employee death. Incident occurred at *address. (MIFACE removed the site address)*

- RULE 408.14002(2): Employee who are in occupations that are listed in table 1 face such a risk of electric shock and are required to be trained. Other employees who also may reasonably be expected to face a comparable risk of injury due to electrical shock or other electrical hazards shall also be trained.

Employees were not provided with adequate training in safety-related work practices when working near exposed energized electrical parts such as overhead lines during dump truck operations. Training did not address minimum approach distances to overhead lines.