

Case 59. 45-year-old male truck driver died from an electrocution when attempting to free a snagged communications wire from the top of his water delivery semi-trailer truck.

On June 3, 2004, a 45-year-old male truck driver died from an electrocution when attempting to free a snagged communications wire from the top of his water delivery semi-trailer truck. The victim had delivered a load of water to a residence to fill a pool. Due to limited room for the vehicle on the limestone driveway and nowhere to turn the semi around, he began to back out of the driveway. The victim may have left one of the tanker hatches open. The long driveway had woods on both sides and he did not use a “spotter” as he backed out. His trailer made contact with an insulated cable television wire that was approximately 12 feet above the ground. He stopped the truck climbed on top of the tanker perhaps to check the clearance or clear the cable wires from the trailer. The cable wire he contacted was approximately 12 feet above the ground. The trailer measured 11 feet 9 inches from the ground to the top of the tanker. The victim was apparently unaware that 4 feet above the phone line was an energized 14,400-volt electrical line. While on top of the tanker, the victim’s upper body/shoulder contacted the electric transmission line. After contacting the energized wire, he fell to the ground and was found by the pool installer and the homeowners who heard an “electrical explosion.” Emergency response arrived and he was transported to a local hospital where he later was pronounced dead.

MIOSHA issued the following Serious citation to the employer:

Serious:

ELECTRICAL SAFETY-RELATED WORK PRACTICES, PART 40, Rule 4002(2)
Insure that exposed employees are trained in and familiar with the safety-related work practices that pertain to their respective job assignments as specified in Rule 4002(3) to 4002(7).

The employer failed to train the employee on required safety distances from electrical power supply lines.