

Case 284. 46-year-old owner of a tree trimming/stump removal business died when he contacted an energized overhead power line of unknown voltage.

A 46-year-old male owner of a tree trimming/stump removal business died when he contacted an energized overhead power line of unknown voltage. The work crew included the decedent and two coworkers. The decedent, who was wearing a climbing harness was aloft in the tree and his coworkers were on the ground. The crown of the tree at its greatest dimension was 11 feet away from the power line. They had been working most of the day. It was beginning to rain. The police report indicated that one of his coworkers stated that the decedent wanted to cut two more small limbs before quitting for the day. The police report stated that his coworkers indicated that as he was cutting these limbs, the rain became heavy and the wind "picked up". The limb involved in the incident was cut, and then slid down into a V between the remaining tree branches and tree and his body inside the safety line around the tree and body harness. Tree limb then fell sideways and contacted the power lines located approximately 11 feet to the side of the tree. Another coworker indicated that when the decedent cut into the small limb, it "just flipped funny" and then hit the power lines. The two coworkers attempted to use the guide rope to pull the limb away from the power line but were unsuccessful. Emergency response was called and found the decedent in his climbing harness hanging from the tree. Emergency responders declared the decedent dead at the scene.

The MIOSHA Safety and Health Division could not make contact with a firm's representative and thus no citations to the firm were issued.