

Case 330. 39-year-old volunteer died when he was electrocuted after contacting an energized 7,200 volt power line while erecting a scaffold.

A 39-year-old male volunteer died when he was electrocuted after contacting an energized 7,200 volt power line while erecting a scaffold. The decedent was employed by the owner of a construction company. The construction company owner was also vice president of a ministry that, among other outreach activities, renovated homes. The construction company owner and the decedent had both volunteered at the ministry for many years and had worked on multiple ministry-related renovation projects. Three individuals were at the construction site: the construction company owner, the decedent, and another ministry volunteer who had traveled to the site from another state. The crew was in the process of erecting a scaffold owned by the construction company to access the area where new fascia and soffit were to be installed. The company owner indicated to the MIOSHA compliance officer that power lines were located approximately 7 feet from the home. The company owner warned the decedent and his coworker of the presence of the power line, instructing them to be careful because the top line was the energized line and the bottom line was the ground (neutral) line. The scaffold was erected, and at the time of the incident, was positioned approximately 9 inches from the neutral and 34.5 inches away from the energized 7,200 volt power line. The construction company owner was standing on the ground. The decedent's coworker was on the 2nd section handing the safety guardrails up to the decedent, who was positioned on the 4th section, installing the guardrails. It is believed that the decedent was holding the rail when it or he touched the energized line. The decedent and safety rail fell to the ground. There were four distinct areas of crater-like electrical burns on the safety rail. Coworkers administered CPR while awaiting the arrival of emergency responders. The decedent was declared dead at the scene.

The MIOSHA Construction Safety and Health Division determined the incident to be non-program-related and no citations were issued to the ministry or the construction firm volunteering its time and materials.