

FATALITY ALERT

– PRELIMINARY INFORMATION --

BCFSC #2016-02-26

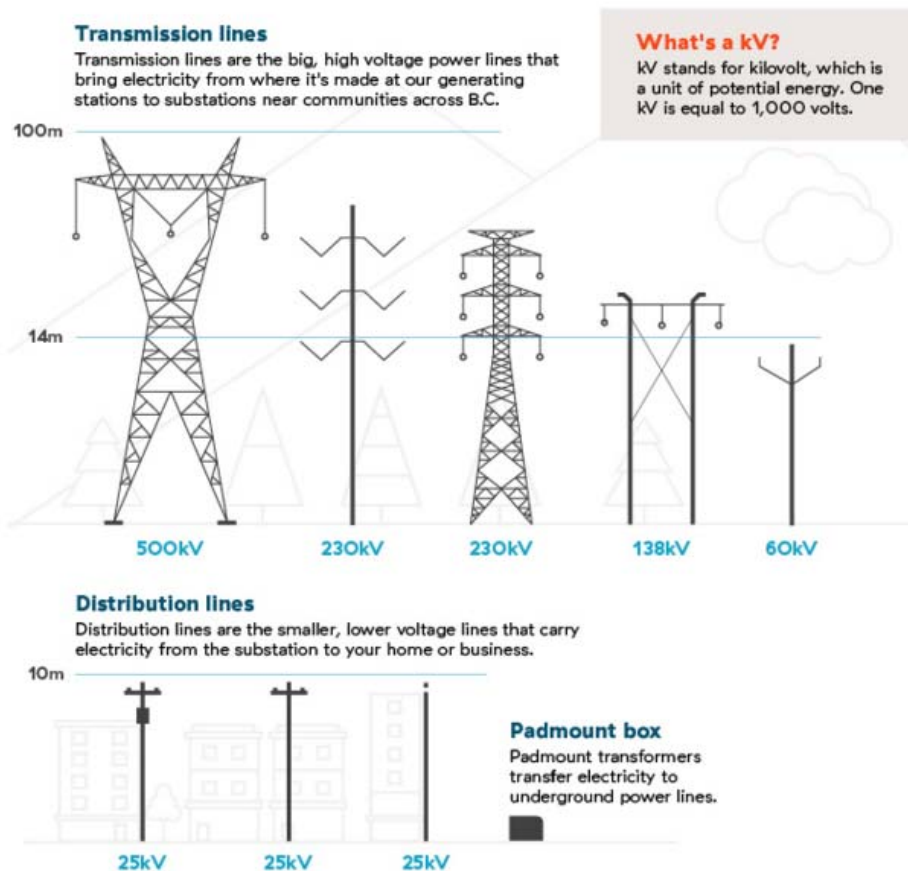
On Friday, February 26th, a worker was fatally injured when a super snorkel that was being moved on a lowbed came into contact with a power line. The worker was electrocuted when he approached and touched the lowbed, which provided the electricity a path to ground. The incident occurred near Port McNeill.

Our condolences go out to the family and co-workers of the deceased worker.

WorkSafeBC and the Coroners Service are investigating this incident and the results will be released as soon as possible.

Although the details of this incident are still unknown, review the following general safety information:

1) Proper pre-work planning is critical when working around powerlines. Identify if there are any overhead or buried powerlines in the work area. For overhead powerlines, determine if they are high voltage transmission lines or low voltage distribution lines and use this information to calculate the safe limit of approach. This is the minimum distance that the machine must stay away from the power lines.



2) Safe Limits of Approach: Electricity can arc or “jump” from the wire to a conducting object like a piece of equipment or a truck. A good general rule is to keep at least 3 meters distance between your machine and overhead distribution power lines and 6 meters for high voltage transmission lines at all times.

Measure the height and reach of any equipment working near powerlines. Position the equipment and plan any moves so the safe limits of approach are maintained.

Consult the local power company if the safe limits of approach distances cannot be maintained. When moving large pieces of equipment, consult reference material like WorkSafeBC’s Grapple Yarder & Supersnorkel Handbook and use spotters as necessary.

The Occupational Health and Safety Regulation – Part 19 Electrical Safety has more detailed information on limits of approach and should be consulted prior to working around electricity.

3) If contact is made with a powerline or a powerline is on the ground, stay back at least 10 meters and contact the appropriate emergency organizations listed in your ERP. This likely will include local Emergency Services and the power company. Do not allow anyone to go within the 10 m area, until it is confirmed by the power company that the power has been turned off to the line.

If you are in a vehicle or piece of equipment that has made contact with a powerline, if possible drive at least 10 meters away to move out of the hazard area. If your vehicle is damaged or stuck, it is safest to stay inside. If you must exit the vehicle or machine due to an immediate threat like a fire, follow these steps:

- Don’t touch the vehicle and the ground at the same time with any part of your body or clothing.
- Remove any loose-fitting clothing like jackets or scarves.
- Use the handle to open the door to your vehicle, but don't touch the door itself.
- Stand at the opening of your door with your elbows tucked into your stomach and your hands held close to your chest.
- Jump out and away from the vehicle. Land with your feet together - don't stumble.
- Calmly shuffle with your feet together. Keep your feet touching as you shuffle. The heel of one foot should still be touching the toe of the other when you start moving the other leg.
- Keep shuffling until you are at least a bus-length away from the vehicle (10 meters or 33 feet).
- Call for help.

4) Emergency responders and other workers helping with incidents must remember to do an adequate scene assessment. Pause and ask yourself “What happened here?” and “What is going to hurt me?” before jumping in to help.

Resources:

1) BC Hydro’s Poster with Emergency Procedures for Power Lines

<https://www.bchydro.com/safety-outages/safety-in-emergencies/motor-vehicle-accident-power-line-infographic.html>

2) BC Hydro’s Safety Resource Page – Includes link to electrical safety poster with “3 Keys to Electrical Safety”

<https://www.bchydro.com/safety-outages/worker-training/safety-resources.html>

3) BC Hydro’s Free Safety Training – Online or Classroom

<https://www.bchydro.com/safety-outages/worker-training/trades.html>

4) Grapple Yarder and Supersnorkel Handbook – Includes a useful section on transporting machines

http://www.worksafebc.com/publications/health_and_safety/by_topic/assets/pdf/grapple_yarder.pdf

5) OHSR Part 19 – Electrical Safety

<https://www2.worksafebc.com/publications/ohsregulation/Part19.asp>

6) Working Safely Around Powerlines Alert

<http://www.bcforestsafe.org/node/2471>