

Electrocution Deaths Oklahoma, 2000-2009

October 2011

Oklahoma Occupational Safety and Health Surveillance Program

Contact with electrical transmission or electric current results in thousands of injuries and deaths each year in the United States. In 2009, 170 workers died due to fatal electrocution injuries. From 2000 to 2009, 63 people were killed in work-related electrocution incidents in Oklahoma. Electrocution injuries accounted for 6% of all work-related deaths in Oklahoma. The age of workers killed ranged from 20 to 73, with a median age of 34. Fatal injuries were most common in the months of July and August. More than half of fatal injuries occurred between 10:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m.

- A lineman was working on a 14,400-volt power line from a bucket truck. He was using the controls to position the lift over the power line. The bucket contacted the primary line; the pistol grip control pad and metal around the bucket became energized. He died nine days later from electrocution and severe burns.
- A tree trimmer was clearing tree limbs from power lines using an aluminum pole. He was suspended 25 feet in the air with a safety belt. The pole contacted an energized power line. He was electrocuted and fell but was suspended by his safety belt. He died an hour later at a local hospital.
- An equipment operator was dumping a load of gravel in a driveway. After unloading, he pulled the dump truck forward and made contact with

power lines. He exited the truck and was electrocuted when his feet hit the ground. He died at the scene.

- A lineman was clearing ice from low-hanging power lines during an ice storm. The lineman thought the power was off and grabbed a neutral line. He was electrocuted and died an hour later at a local hospital.
- A worker was in a small attic space of a restaurant installing a commercial neon sign. He attempted to connect a dry cell transformer box to an existing 220-volt electrical line. The line was still functioning when he cut into it with a pair of wire cutters. He was electrocuted and



**ELECTRIC CURRENT
KEEP AWAY**

**Oklahoma State
Department of Health
Injury Prevention
Service
1000 NE 10th Street
Oklahoma City, OK
73117
405-271-3430 or
1-800-522-0204**

SAFETY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Be alert to potential hazards. Do not distract fellow workers.
- Pre-plan your work through a documented job briefing: identify correct work methods (possible hazards, risk mitigation, emergency response), procedures, tools, equipment, and PPE.
- Wear proper safety equipment. Dielectric footwear and arc-rated/flame resistant clothing should be worn by workers who may be exposed to electrical hazards.
- Be aware of and keep a safe distance from power lines near a work site.
- Avoid using metal or ladders with metal components near electrical work or power lines.
- Work closely with utility companies to determine if power lines are energized or insulated. Call 811 or 1-800-522-OKIE before digging.
- De-energize and visibly ground electrical distribution and transmission lines. Use independent insulated barriers to prevent physical contact with power lines.
- Ensure workers are clear of power lines before re-energizing them.
- Follow lockout/tagout procedures for all electrical panels, boxes, etc.
- Do not store materials/equipment below or near overhead power lines.
- Ensure ladders and scaffolding are level, supported, and stable to avoid movement and contact with power lines.

<http://www.callokie.com>

https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/etools/construction/electrical_incidents/mainpage.html

https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/etools/electric_power/overhead_line_work.html

The Oklahoma Occupational Safety and Health Surveillance Program collects statewide information on 19 occupational health conditions in order to develop and inform occupational injury and illness prevention programs.

**For detailed reports, please go to the Occupational Injuries section at:
<http://ips.health.ok.gov>**