

TOOLBOX TALK #41

FIELD TECH ELECTROCUTED

A 31-year-old field technician was part of a two-person engineering crew tasked with surveying power lines in a residential area with homes located on each side of a two-lane highway. The technicians worked their way from pole to pole, collecting data such as pole height, distance between poles and each pole's proximity to the highway.

During the course of their duties, the technicians encountered a downed power line, likely the result of a recent windstorm. The downed power line was entangled in a nearby tree that stood about 8 feet from the utility pole. After the victim located the downed line, he worked to free it from the tree.



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Although the line was not initially energized, it became energized at some point during the untangling process and delivered an electric shock to the victim, killing him instantly. The cause of death was listed as high-voltage electrocution.

To help prevent similar occurrences, employers should:

- Consider developing policies and procedures that specify the standard operating procedures (SOPs) for employees who encounter a downed power line.
- Perform a job hazard analysis.
- Provide hazard awareness training to employees annually.