

## Emergency procedure

What to do if your scaffolding comes into contact with an overhead line:

- Assume the line / wires are alive, even if they are not sparking.
- Remember that, even if they are dead, the wires can become alive again with no notice. This may occur automatically after a few seconds or up to several hours later if Jersey Electricity are not aware that the line has been damaged.
- If you can, use your mobile telephone to call the emergency services. Give them your location as accurately as you can. Tell them there are electricity wires involved and ask them to contact Jersey Electricity.
- If any of your equipment or vehicles are in contact with an electricity wire or close to a damaged overhead wire then move away as quickly as you can and stay away until the emergency services or Jersey Electricity arrive.
- Once a wire is on the ground you do not have to touch it to be killed. The current may travel a significant distance through the ground and even further if the wire has fallen on a fence or other metallic objects. Be Aware, Keep Clear.
- If someone is stood on a scaffolding structure that is in contact with a line it is best for them to remain inside. Keep everyone else clear.
- If you have to get out, then try and JUMP clear rather than stepping off the vehicle.
- If staying on a scaffold structure would put you in serious danger (for example – if it is likely to collapse) and you have to get off, then always jump well clear rather than stepping out before moving away quickly as you can. Make sure you do not touch the scaffolding and the ground at the same time.
- Never touch any equipment, vehicle or material or any part of a scaffold structure that you suspect might be touching an electricity line even if you think the line is dead
- A Jersey Electricity engineer will confirm when the power has been turned off allowing the rescue to proceed safely
- Do not allow anyone to approach the scaffolding until it is confirmed safe to do so by Jersey Electricity engineers

## Communication Information

For advice, telephone Jersey Electricity on 505460

Alternatively log on to the Energy Networks Association website [www.energynetworks.org](http://www.energynetworks.org)



# Safety Information for Scaffolders and Building Contractors

The erection of scaffolding too close to live electricity conductors can place you, your staff and the public at serious risk of potentially fatal personal injury.

**KEEP AWAY FROM POWER LINES**



This leaflet is published by Jersey Electricity based on guidance provided by the Energy Networks Association

## Introduction

There are more than 100km of electricity overhead lines crossing the countryside in Jersey. Often unnoticed, they are essential to provide electricity to the rural communities in all 12 parishes. In the UK, overhead lines carry voltages ranging from 230 volts (domestic voltage) up to 400,000 volts but in Jersey, overhead lines are restricted to 230 / 400 volts, which can still provide a lethal shock.

In the UK, approximately five people die every year due to accidental contact with overhead power lines, and it is important that trades that work near or around the overhead line environment have a clear understanding of the associated risks and precautions.

This leaflet provides a basic guide to maximise your chances of remaining safe when working or planning scaffolding activities, near or around overhead electricity lines.

## Some general key points

- In Jersey, electricity overhead lines are restricted to 230 / 400 volts, which can still provide a lethal shock.
- **Never assume** that electrical equipment is dead, even if the wires have fallen or broken.
- **Remember that** the power can be switched back on at any time, without warning.
- Touching electricity wires or objects / persons in contact with the wires **can be fatal**.
- Even the 230 volt overhead lines can produce **10,000 times more current** than is required to kill a person.
- Electricity can jump gaps.
- Trees, string, ropes, suspension lines and water can conduct electricity.
- Rubber boots **will not protect** you.
- Most overhead electricity wires **are not** insulated.

## What are the risks to you

Overhead electricity lines are erected above a statutory minimum height that, in normal circumstances, places them safely out of reach. However, anyone carrying long scaffold poles or erecting / working on tall structures is at increased risk of contact with live conductors.

## How could this happen

In recent years, **several people have been injured or killed** when erecting or working on scaffolding structures. This happened because they, or the items they were carrying, inadvertently came into contact with or too close to live overhead lines.

Also, any scaffolding that is too close to, or in contact with, live electricity conductors could itself become live and this could pose a serious, potentially fatal, hazard to anyone in the vicinity on the ground.

## What can you do about it

Before setting up any scaffolding, it is important that you **look out and look up**.

Advise Jersey Electricity (505460) of any proposed works within 9m of overhead power lines

**Do not** erect scaffolding within 3 metres of an overhead power line

Even if the scaffolding is more than 3 metres from an overhead line **take great care** when carrying and erecting long scaffolding poles

**Never** carry long scaffold poles vertically – **always** carry them horizontally

**Never** attach or tie any scaffolding to power line wood poles, pylons or electrical equipment

Never attempt to cover, remove or re-site power lines yourself if they are in the way of scaffolding. **This must only be done by Jersey Electricity personnel.**

Even if the lines have been covered or shrouded remember that the covering is generally only designed to protect against inadvertent contact – do not subject any lines to any heavy or prolonged contact / wear

## Look for the signs

- Electricity poles are usually fitted with yellow **“Danger of Death”** notices
- It is very difficult to judge the height of lines, **so do not attempt to do so**
- **It is dangerous** to dismiss the lines as merely a telephone wire – it is very difficult to tell telephone and electricity wires apart
- Always assume that all overhead lines carry live electricity and are dangerous
- The best way to control the risk from live electricity lines is to consider the issue in your planning process. Get into the habit of taking a good look around for power lines every time you visit a new site
- Consider adding a check box for **power lines safety** on your working instructions
- Make sure all of your staff and sub contractors are aware of the risks from power lines
- If you have any doubts at any stage of your works always contact Jersey Electricity on 505460
- To minimise any delays please give Jersey Electricity as much notice as possible
- Don't forget before starting work **look up and around** you
- If in doubt **stop and stay away**