



POWER AND UTILITY LINE SAFETY

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Power, telephone, gas, and fiber-optic lines are a common sight throughout the forests in the U.S. Careless logging near overhead power lines causes many accidents. Underground utilities—especially buried gas lines—can be very dangerous. Train your employees on proper working procedures.

The following are a few common sense procedures to include in your logging plan while harvesting timber near power lines. For more detailed explanation check the general standard requirements of OSHA Standards 29 CFR 1910.333(c)(3).

- 1) Check all roads and entry points for utility lines before moving equipment into a tract. This especially includes equipment being moved to a logging job on low-boys.
- 2) Do not set your log loading deck under power lines or over underground lines. Do not operate the loader within one hundred (100) feet of all electric power lines. Never route a skid trail over buried gas lines without first consulting with the gas company for required precautions, instructions, and prohibitions.
- 3) Have a safety meeting with your crew on power line safety before work begins when power lines are present.
- 4) Whenever possible maintain a safe operating distance of at least fifty (50) feet from a power line for all harvesting activities. Contact the power company if hazardous, avoidable situations cannot be eliminated. Have the identification number of the poles to help identify the line location. If you are harvesting large timber, fifty feet may not be enough. When in doubt, leave all trees near power lines standing, or contact the power company for assistance prior to felling.
- 5) Have the power company telephone number readily available in case of an accident.
- 6) If equipment contacts a live power line the operator should remain in the machine until the power is shut off. If the electricity cannot be cut off or the threat of fire is extreme, the operator should jump clear of the equipment before contacting the ground.
- 7) Do not go near downed power lines.
- 8) Do not attempt to cut or move trees that touch power lines. There is no way to predict when energy may be restored.
- 9) Treat all power lines as if they are live.

Remember: it is not just the utility company's expense to repair a line that has been damaged; interruptions from loss of power, gas, or other services may lead to loss of income from businesses that depend on those services.

Prepared by the Southwide Safety Committee, Forest Resources Association Inc.