

# FACE Facts

## FATALITY INVESTIGATION REPORT

Occupational Health Surveillance Program  
Massachusetts Department of Public Health  
November 2006



## Roofer Electrocuted When Aluminum Extension Ladder Contacts Overhead Power Line — Massachusetts

**Background:** In Massachusetts, from 1991 – 2004, 18 workers were electrocuted either through direct contact with energized power lines or when the equipment they were using touched the power lines. Fourteen of these electrocutions occurred in the construction industry. As with most occupational injuries and fatalities, these electrocutions could have been prevented.



Keep yourself and equipment a minimum of 10 feet away from energized power lines.

**Incident:** A 40-year-old male roofer was fatally electrocuted and a 21-year-old coworker was seriously injured when the 32-foot aluminum extension ladder they were unloading from a pickup truck came in contact with an energized overhead power line. The victim and the coworker, who were bringing equipment to the jobsite, parked the pickup truck and started to unload the aluminum extension ladder. As the victim and the coworker lifted the already extended aluminum extension ladder off of the pickup truck, it came in contact with the overhead energized power lines.

## Overhead power lines are not insulated!

While some overhead power lines have a coating to protect them from the weather, this coating will **NOT PROTECT YOU** from electric shock.

### How can you work safely around overhead power lines?

#### When you arrive at a jobsite:

- ♦ Always assume all overhead power lines are energized.
- ♦ Survey the jobsite for overhead power lines prior to beginning work, or prior to unloading ladders and other equipment from trucks.

#### When work is going to bring you closer than 10 feet from overhead power lines:

- ♦ Notify the local electric company for assistance prior to beginning work.

#### When working near overhead power lines (more than 10 feet away):

- ♦ Keep yourself and all equipment (ladders, scaffolding, tools) a minimum of 10 feet away from power lines.
- ♦ Only use dry and clean nonconductive ladders, such as fiberglass. Never use conductive ladders, such as aluminum or even damp wooden ladders.
- ♦ Never attempt to move or reposition an extended extension ladder.
- ♦ Do not store materials or equipment, such as ladders, below or near overhead power lines.

In addition, employers should train all workers on the hazards and safe procedures of working near energized power lines.

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### Health and Safety Resources

#### *In Massachusetts:*

- ♦ Massachusetts Division of Occupational Safety  
Offers free consultation services to help employers to improve their safety and health programs and train employees  
[www.mass.gov/dos/consult/index.htm](http://www.mass.gov/dos/consult/index.htm)
- ♦ Massachusetts Department of Industrial Accidents  
Has grants available for providing workplace health and safety training to employers/employees in companies covered by the Massachusetts Workers' Compensation Insurance Law  
[www.mass.gov/dia/Safety/index.htm](http://www.mass.gov/dia/Safety/index.htm)
- ♦ Occupational Health Surveillance Program (OHSP): [www.mass.gov/dph/ohsp](http://www.mass.gov/dph/ohsp)  
OHSP Residential Fall Prevention Brochures

#### *Other Resources:*

- ♦ National Grid New England Hazard Identification Hotline: 1-888-625-3723  
[www.nationalgridus.com/masselectric/safety.asp](http://www.nationalgridus.com/masselectric/safety.asp)
- ♦ National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH):  
[www.cdc.gov/niosh/homepage.html](http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/homepage.html)
- ♦ NIOSH: Traumatic Occupational Injuries, Electrical Safety:  
[www.cdc.gov/niosh/injury/traumaelec.html](http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/injury/traumaelec.html)
- ♦ Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA): [www.osha.gov](http://www.osha.gov)  
OSHA Construction eTool: [www.osha.gov/SLTC/etools/construction/index.html](http://www.osha.gov/SLTC/etools/construction/index.html)
- ♦ The Center to Protect Workers' Rights  
Don't Fall For It (DVD): [www.cpwr.com/rp-videosdvds.html](http://www.cpwr.com/rp-videosdvds.html)

The Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH), in cooperation with the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, conducts research oriented investigations of fatal work-related injuries. The project, known as FACE (Fatality Assessment and Control Evaluation), seeks to identify the factors that contribute to occupational fatalities. The FACE project will help in the development and use of improved safety measures for preventing future work-related fatal injuries.

We hope you find the "FACE Facts" informative and that you will share it with others. This document is in the public domain and may be copied freely and can be found on the MDPH Web site at [www.mass.gov/dph/ohsp](http://www.mass.gov/dph/ohsp). If you have comments or questions, please call the FACE Project at 1-800 338-5223.

