

UNDER EMBARGO UNTIL 00:01 6 August 2019

LORRY DRIVERS TOLD TO ‘*LOOK OUT LOOK UP!*’ AS KNOWLEDGE GAP LEADS TO ELECTROCUTION FATALITIES

- On average, one person dies or is injured each month from contact with an overhead power line
- Research reveals road haulage workers (particularly those making deliveries with tippers, lorry mounted cranes or grab arms) are some of the most at risk of fatal electric shocks from overhead power lines.
- Over half (50%) of lorry drivers do not know all the proper safety requirements for working near overhead power lines
- Lorry drivers make up over a quarter (26%) of fatalities from overhead power lines

New research from [Energy Networks Association](#) (ENA) reveals lorry drivers do not know how to avoid fatal injuries when working near overhead power lines.

The research is released alongside a [newly launched film](#) highlighting the dangers of overhead power lines and a call for workers to familiarise themselves with safety advice and call 105 if an incident occurs.

On average, one person dies or is injured each month as a result of contact with overhead power lines. Data from the Health & Safety Executive shows that one in four of these cases (26%) will involve a lorry driver, making road haulage workers at extreme risk of fatal injury in the workplace.

Despite this threat to life, ENA found that over 50% of lorry drivers do not understand the proper safety requirements for working near overhead power lines.

Only 5% know to call 105 to contact the network operators for incidents involving overhead power lines. In fact, more people (7.6%) think you should call 911 – the American emergency services – if you’ve been involved in a collision.

In addition, a third of lorry drivers (36%) did not know electricity can jump small gaps which can cause a potentially fatal electric shock.

Overhead power lines have the capacity to carry voltages anywhere between 230 volts (domestic voltage) up to 400,000 volts. Even domestic voltage can be fatal and high voltage electricity can jump gaps meaning you don’t have to be in direct physical contact with a conductor to experience a fatal electric shock.

Furthermore, almost a third of lorry drivers (35%) believe the best thing to do when involved in a collision with an overhead power line is to exit the vehicle and call for help, when exiting the vehicle can actually put you at immediate risk of fatal injury.

When a vehicle or piece of machinery touches an overhead power line, it acts as a conductor passing the high voltage electricity through it. If you were to then exit your vehicle, keeping contact with it while your feet also touch the ground this voltage would pass through you, certainly causing serious injury and, in most cases, death.

To help prevent the number of fatalities amongst lorry drivers, the ENA has launched a new *Look Out Look Up!* film targeting those working within the industry. The thought-provoking film explores the journey of two road haulage workers carrying out a job near overhead power lines that results in a fatal accident. As well as showcasing the dangers of working near overhead power lines, the film also reveals the devastating affects these accidents can have on friends and family.

David Smith, chief executive of Energy Networks Association, said: "It's extremely concerning to hear that even though lorry drivers are some of the most-at-risk of fatal injury involving an overhead power line, over half do not properly understand when they could be at risk. It is vital that they are supported to know how they can stay safe and call 105 immediately if there is an incident.

"That's why we've launched *Look Out Look Up!* to highlight the campaign and created a new information film specifically for those whose work involves larger vehicles like lorries or tipper trucks."

One person that understands the life-threatening risks facing lorry drivers working near overhead power lines is Gavin White, director of crane lorry company, GW Grab Services.

In 2018, Gavin lost one of his closest friends, Darren Waterman, who died while performing a routine job when the vehicle he was operating collided with an overhead power line. Darren died on site from a fatal electric shock, leaving behind a wife and two young children.

Gavin said: "I'd known Darren for almost 10 years. Working in the same industry we had a lot in common and were very close. When I found out what happened, I was really shook up. Overhead power lines are an everyday encounter for lorry drivers, yet so many of us fail to understand the life-threatening risks at stake.

"It's hard to comprehend going to work and not coming home at the end of the day, but one small lapse in concentration can cost you your life – it cost Darren his."

The film is available on YouTube at <https://youtu.be/2jwQALxT3v0> and can also be found at the ENA website along with further information here -<http://www.energynetworks.org/electricity/she/safety/safety-advice/overhead-power-lines-safety-campaign-transport-hauliers.html>.

ENDS

For more information and further press enquiries, please contact Kindred:

Courtney Grover: courtney.grover@kindredagency.com / 0207 010 0876

Dan Goodrich: dan.goodrich@kindredagency.com / 0207 010 0820

Bethan Davies: bethan.davies@kindredagency.com / 0207 010 0851

Notes to editors:

How to stay safe working near overhead power lines

In addition to this thought-provoking film, the ENA has also released a new set of life-saving safety guidelines targeted towards lorry whose work may take place near overhead power lines:

1. **Risk assess** – know where overhead power lines are and mark them on a map. Find out the height and reach of your equipment and how this compares to the maximum working height under overhead power lines. Share this information with workers and contractors.
2. **Control measures** – don't work near an overhead power line if you don't have to. Speak to your electricity network operator for advice. Select suitable machinery and equipment and use it safely.
3. **Know what's safe, and what isn't** – certain work should be avoided within 10 metres of overhead power lines, such as for example operating Lorry mounted cranes (such as Hiabs or Palingers), Mobile Elevated Work Platforms (MEWP's), tipper vehicles and cranes.
4. **Keep your distance** - when overhead power lines are damaged or fall to the ground, individuals should stay well away and contact their local network operator by telephoning 105.
5. **Know what to do if you make contact** - if your vehicle has come into contact with an overhead power line, stay in the cab and try to drive clear. If that is not possible, jump clear of the machine, move away and don't touch it once on the ground.

Call 105 – if an incident occurs, contact your network operator by calling the national 24-hour emergency number 105.**Research references:**

1. All figures, unless otherwise stated, are from Attest. Total sample size was 200 adults aged 16-65 living in the UK and were required to have any of the following UK driving licenses: large/heavy goods vehicle (LGV/HGV); road roller; agricultural tractor. Fieldwork was undertaken between 28 June – 4 July 2019. The survey was carried out online. You can download the full report via the ENA website: <http://www.energynetworks.org/electricity/she/safety/safety-advice/overhead-power-lines-safety-campaign.html>.
2. All figures supplied by the Health and Safety Executive are from: *Fatal Incident reports involving public electricity infrastructure OHL conductor / OHL Support Structure*. Full reports and details of work-related fatalities in the UK can be found via the HSE website: <http://www.hse.gov.uk/statistics/fatal.s.htm> and <http://www.hse.gov.uk/foi/fatalities/>.
3. Energy Networks Association (ENA) is the voice of networks representing the 'wires and pipes' transmission and distribution network operators for gas and electricity in the UK and Ireland.
4. In Great Britain, there are 10 electricity Distribution Network Operators (DNO) that are responsible for the electricity networks that deliver energy from the national transmission networks into people's homes and businesses 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Further

information on the UK's DNOs can be found via ENA's website, at:

<http://www.energynetworks.org/info/faqs/electricity-distribution-map.html>

5. ENA was responsible for the launch of 105 – the official number to contact network operators for incidents involving overhead power lines. 105 is a free service, available to people in England, Scotland and Wales. You can call the number from most landlines and mobile phones. For more information on 105, please visit: <https://www.powercut105.com/>.
6. The following websites can be used as further reference points:
 - ENA Public Safety Leaflets:
<http://www.energynetworks.org/electricity/she/safety/safety-advice/public-safety-leaflets.html>
 - Find your Electricity & Gas Network Operator:
<http://www.energynetworks.org/info/faqs/who-is-my-network-operator.html>
 - HSE construction safety advice:
<http://www.hse.gov.uk/construction/safetytopics/overhead.htm>

The following regional UK network operators are supporting the campaign:

- UK Power Networks
- Western Power Distribution
- National Grid
- Northern Powergrid
- Northern Ireland Electricity Networks
- Electricity North West
- SP Energy Networks
- Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks