

# Be Safe – Be Legal

STATE LAW REQUIRES  
PERMISSION FROM A UTILITY  
BEFORE WORKING NEAR  
OVERHEAD POWER LINES



OVERHEAD POWER LINE  
SAFETY LAW





The safety of those working near electrical lines has long been a concern of Sierra Pacific Power Company and other electric utilities. Accidents involving contact with high voltage lines can result in serious injury and even death. The Nevada

Legislature has enacted a law requiring utilities be notified and give consent before work is done near overhead power lines. The law also requires utilities to respond promptly when notified.

Let's work together to provide safer working conditions near overhead power lines.

The major points of the law are summarized here. The exact text of the law is printed in the last section of this brochure.

### **WHO NEEDS TO CALL?**

Anyone planning to work within 10 feet of a line carrying between 600 volts and 50 kilovolts (KV) of electricity. For lines with more than 50 kilovolts, the clearance distance increases by four tenths of an inch for each additional kilovolt. This means that a person or business planning to work with hand tools or operate equipment within 10 feet (or more for higher voltage lines) must call.

### **WHO DO YOU CALL?**

Call the electric utility operating the line. In Sierra Pacific Power Company's service territory, contact the local office.

## OVERHEAD

Reno	(775) 834-4166	1-(800) 962-0399
Battle Mountain	(775) 635-2476	1-(800) 962-4168
Carson City	(775) 834-2900	1-(800) 962-4167
Elko	(775) 738-3188	1-(800) 962-4166
Fallon	(775) 423-5148	1-(800) 962-0408
Hawthorne	(775) 945-3366	1-(800) 962-0402
Lovelock	(775) 273-2627	1-(800) 322-8652
Minden	(775) 782-2541	1-(800) 962-0406
Tonopah	(775) 482-6808	1-(800) 962-0396
Winnemucca	(775) 623-3667	1-(800) 962-4182
Yerington	(775) 463-2315	1-(800) 962-4169
South Tahoe	(530) 541-2040	1-(800) 782-2498
North Tahoe	(530) 546-1700	1-(800) 782-2506

### THEN WHAT HAPPENS?

The law states the utility “shall promptly consent” to the work if it “can be performed with reasonable safety.” Additionally, the utility is allowed to place conditions on the consent to do the work. These could include:

- reasonable limits on the time, place and manner of the work;
- placing barriers to prevent contact with the lines;
- temporarily disconnecting the power to the lines.

Any work to be done by the utility as the result of these conditions must be started within five working days of:

- a. Receiving notice of work planned near an overhead line, or
- b. executing an agreement on payment for preventative work needed to meet these conditions.

## WHO PAYS FOR PREVENTATIVE MEASURES?

The law states that the person responsible for the work near overhead lines “shall pay any actual expenses” of the utility in providing the preventative measures. The only exception is when work is being done on a structure that was already in place when the overhead line was installed.

## WHAT IF YOU DON'T CALL?

The law is a safety law, and you are placing yourself or your employees in a potentially dangerous situation. You will be responsible for all costs, damages and expenses incurred by the public utility as a result of an act constituting a violation of the law. Also, penalties of up to \$1,000 per day could be imposed.



## THE OVERHEAD POWER LINE SAFETY LAW 455.200.

### DEFINITIONS.

As used in NRS 455.200 to 455.250, inclusive, unless the context otherwise requires:

1. “High voltage” means voltage in excess of 600 volts measured between conductors or between a conductor and a ground.
2. “Overhead line” means a bare or insulated electrical conductor installed above ground.
3. “Public utility” has the meaning ascribed to it

in NRS 704.020. (1993, ch. 305, § 2, 9.878.)

### **455.210. APPLICABILITY OF PROVISIONS.**

The provisions of NRS 455.220 and 455.230 are not applicable to:

1. An employee of a public utility which produces, transmits or delivers electricity, or a public utility which provides communication services, while the employee, in the course of his employment, constructs, modifies or maintains:
  - (a) Electrical systems;
  - (b) Communication systems; or
  - (c) Overhead electrical or communication circuits or conductors, or the structures supporting them.
  
2. An employee of a cable antenna television system or a business which provides communications services, while the employee, acting within the scope of his employment, is making service attachments to the structure supporting an overhead line carrying high voltage, if authorized to do so by the public utility operating the overhead line. (1993, ch. 305, § 3, p.878.)



### **455.220. CONDUCTING OF ACTIVITIES NEAR LINE: PROHIBITION; EXCEPTION.**

Except as otherwise provided in NRS 455.230:

1. A person shall not perform any act if it is reasonably foreseeable that during the performance of the act, he or any part of any tool or material used by him, is likely to

be moved or to be placed any closer to an overhead line carrying high voltage than the following clearances:

- (a) For lines rated 50 kilovolts or less, 10 feet of clearance.
- (b) For lines rated greater than 50 kilovolts, 10 feet of clearance plus four-tenths of an inch of clearance for each kilovolt greater than 50 kilovolts.

2. A person shall not operate any mechanical or hoisting equipment in a manner by which any part of the equipment or load of the equipment is capable by vertical, lateral or swinging motion to be moved or to be placed any closer to an overhead line carrying high voltage than the following clearances:

- (a) For lines rated 50 kilovolts or less, 10 feet of clearance.
- (b) For lines rated greater than 50 kilovolts, 10 feet of clearance plus four-tenths of an inch of clearance for each kilovolt greater than 50 kilovolts. (1993, ch. 305, § 4, p.878.)

**455.230. CONDUCTING OF ACTIVITIES NEAR LINE: AUTHORIZATION; POWERS AND DUTIES OF PUBLIC UTILITY; PAYMENT OF EXPENSES FOR PREVENTATIVE MEASURES.**

1. A person may perform an act or operate equipment in closer proximity to an overhead line carrying high voltage than authorized by NRS 455.220 if, before performing the work:
- (a) Notice of the work to be performed is provided to the public utility operating the overhead line carrying high voltage; and
  - (b) The public utility operating the overhead

line carrying high voltage consents to the performance of the work.



2. If the work can be performed with reasonable safety, the public utility shall promptly consent to the performance of the work. As a condition of consent, the public utility may:
  - (a) Reasonably limit the time, place and manner of the work to preserve public safety.
  - (b) Place temporary mechanical barriers to separate and prevent contact between material, equipment or persons and the overhead line carrying high voltage.
  - (c) Temporarily disconnect power to the overhead line, ground the overhead line or relocate the overhead line.
  
3. Except as otherwise provided in this subsection, the person responsible for performing the work in the vicinity of the overhead line carrying high voltage shall pay any actual expenses incurred by the public utility in carrying out the preventative measures required as a condition of consent pursuant to paragraphs (b) and (c) of subsection 2. If, at the time the public utility installed the overhead line involved, the structure on which the person is performing the work was within 10 feet of the overhead line, the public utility shall pay any actual expenses incurred by it in carrying out the preventative measures required as a condition

of consent pursuant to paragraphs (b) and (c) of subsection 2.

4. The public utility may require that an agreement regarding payment be executed before the public utility carries out the preventative measures required as a condition of consent pursuant to paragraphs (b) and (c) of subsection 2.
5. The public utility shall initiate the provision of preventative measures required as a condition of consent pursuant to paragraphs (b) and (c) of subsection 2:
  - (a) If an agreement regarding payment for the preventative measures is required, within 5 working days after the date the agreement is executed.
  - (b) If an agreement regarding payment for the preventative measures is not required, within 5 working days after the date that the public utility receives notice of the work pursuant to paragraph (a) of subsection 1.

The preventative measures must be completed as soon as practicable. (1993, ch. 305, § 5, p.879.)



#### **455.240. LIABILITY FOR VIOLATION CAUSING CONTACT WITH LINE.**

If an act constituting a violation of any provision of this chapter causes contact with an overhead line carrying high voltage, each person who committed the violation or caused another person



to commit the violation shall pay the public utility operating the overhead line carrying high voltage for:

1. All damages to property of the public utility;
2. All reasonable costs and expenses incurred by the public utility as a result of the contact; and
3. The costs and expenses incurred by the public utility as a result of the contact for damages to third persons.

Each person who committed a violation causing the contact or who caused another person to commit a violation causing the contact is jointly and severally liable for the payment required by this section. (1993, ch. 305, § 6, p.879.)

### **455.250. CIVIL PENALTY: ACTION FOR ENFORCEMENT; AMOUNT; DISPOSITION OF PROCEEDS; JUDICIAL REVIEW.**

1. An action for the enforcement of a civil penalty pursuant to this section may be brought before the public utilities commission of Nevada by the attorney general, a district attorney, a city attorney or legal counsel for the public utilities commission of Nevada.
2. Any person who violates a provision of NRS 455.200 to 455.240, inclusive, is liable for a civil penalty not to exceed \$1,000 per day for each violation.
3. The amount of any civil penalty imposed pursuant to this section and the propriety of any settlement or compromise concerning a penalty must be determined by the public

utilities commission of Nevada upon receipt of a complaint by the attorney general, an employee of the public utilities commission of Nevada who is engaged in regulatory operations, a district attorney or a city attorney.

4. In determining the amount of the penalty or the amount agreed upon in a settlement or compromise, the public utilities commission of Nevada shall consider:
  - (a) The gravity of the violation;
  - (b) The good faith of the person charged with the violation in attempting to comply with the provisions of NRS 455.200 to 455.240, inclusive, before and after notification of a violation; and
  - (c) Any history of previous violations of those provisions by the person charged with the violation.
5. A civil penalty recovered pursuant to this section must first be paid to reimburse the person who initiated the action for any cost incurred in prosecuting the matter. Any amount remaining after such reimbursement must be deposited in the state general fund.
6. Any person aggrieved by a determination of the public utilities commission of Nevada pursuant to this section may seek judicial review of the determination in the manner provided by NRS 703.373.  
(1993, ch. 305, § 7, p.880.)

## **BE SAFE BE LEGAL**

Call your electric utility before you work near overhead power lines.

# Free Safety Training Available

A few simple precautions can help you stay safe whenever you're working near overhead or underground power lines or near natural gas lines.

Sierra Pacific will provide safety training to groups of employees free of charge. For more information, just call our Public Safety Coordinator at:

**(775) 834-4500**



**Sierra Pacific™**  
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