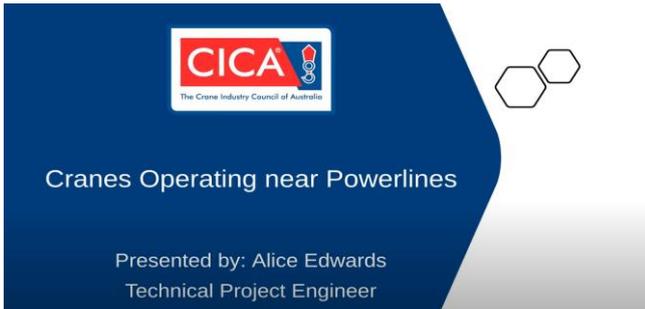


A brilliant resource available online to all.

Electrical Safety cannot be emphasised enough when it comes to the construction industry. I've written bulletins about it ([249](#), [238](#), [207](#)), there are CICA [DVD's](#) available from our website and now we have a brand new [Video](#) by our own Project Engineer Alice Edwards, on our [CICA YouTube Channel](#).



While the majority of electrical contact incidents occur on back-hoe excavators and trucks, there were still 9 Victorian cases detected last year that the WorkSafe Victoria data filters picked up as crane related. 7 were mobile cranes and 2 were tower cranes. We must also be aware that not all incidents are reported, especially near misses and those with no serious injuries.

There is no single answer to the question of why cranes come into contact with electrical assets if you review individual incident descriptions. This is because you have different crane types, environments, loads, crews and site hazards. 3 of the 9 Victorian electrical incidents involved Snagging loads and losing partial control of the load or rigging causing electrical contact. Snagging loads is very common and will be discussed in future bulletins as there are many serious consequences like dropped loads, and sudden swinging of loads causing crushing. This shows us is that hitting a powerline is often a secondary outcome of far more fundamental mistakes. In those 3 cases mentioned above, it may have been poor execution. However, to be fair, we cannot assume that there was not an avoidable issue upstream that contributed to the incident. In the photo below, the crane appears to have tipped over causing the electrical contact.



If you take a step back, you do find one common cause that could be applied to many accidents, and that's a lack of planning, which in the case of crane tipping, is known to be the best preventative.

As Alice explains in the video, there are 2 key areas for removing the possibility of any electrical contact.

1. Proper LIFT PLANNING should determine if there are any electrical hazards in the area and provide the opportunity to ELIMINATE the hazard using the hierarchy of control ([Bulletin 243](#)). Examples are choosing a different crane setup location or organising for the power to be turned off.
2. The Crane Operator and crew should have a site-specific SWMS ([Bulletin 242](#)) and conduct a site inspection prior to commencement of work to identify any electrical hazards. At the very least, there should always be a spotter present where any power lines are within the specified proximities.

For the other crane electrical contacts that have been reported, there is a distinct lack of references to spotters being present. It's a timely reminder that if you haven't got a dedicated person watching the proximity to the electrical hazard, you are significantly exposed.



The [Video](#) is a great quick guide reference and covers all the key elements of the topic. Alice's thoughtful and concise delivery of the content is perfect for showing in toolbox talks, prestart meetings and lunchrooms. Safety material should be digestible for all, and while printed media is essential, it must be supplemented with video. The average literacy level of constructions workers has been reported to be that of year 9 high school. Also let's not forget that most people absorb more from videos than reading print.

Remember, we can't afford to become complacent, even if we work with electrical assets every day. It only takes one slip up which can change your life forever.

Stay Safe -CICA