Quick Card

The Hazards of Indirect Electrical Contact

An electrical hazard exists when any tree worker, or a conductive object he/she may be in contact with, must approach closer than 10 feet to any overhead conductor. Indirect contact through a tree limb, a conductive tool, an aluminum ladder, other conductive equipment, etc. may lead to serious or fatal injury.

Potential Hazard Situations
- Pruning or removing trees near energized conductors.
- Using conductive pole tools.
- Using conductive ladders.
- Using conductive lift devices or materials handling equipment.

Hazard Avoidance Practices
- The employer must assure that each employee has been trained to recognize and is appropriately qualified to work near any electrical hazard that might be encountered at a worksite.

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A qualified person must inspect the worksite to determine whether an electrical hazard will be created before climbing, otherwise entering, or performing work in or on a tree.

Non line-clearance personnel shall maintain a minimum approach distance of at least 10 feet from any overhead conductor.

Only line-clearance tree trimmers or line-clearance tree trimmer trainees shall be assigned to work where an electrical hazard exists. Line-clearance tree trimmer trainees must work under the direct supervision of line-clearance tree trimmers.

Branches contacting energized conductors must only be removed by qualified individuals using non-conductive equipment.

**Electrical Hazard Abatement**

When tree work cannot be safely completed with the line energized, the arborist must stop work on that assignment until an electrical hazard abatement plan is implemented.

An electrical hazard abatement plan may include a request for the utility to de-energize, test, and ground the electric supply lines at the worksite.

For non-line-clearance tree workers, the electrical hazard abatement plan may require they hire a line-clearance contractor to perform the work.

**For Further Information**

TCIA: [www.tcia.org](http://www.tcia.org)