Quick Card

Electrical Step Potential Hazard Avoidance

Step potential is the voltage difference between the feet of a person near an energized, grounded Object. A person on the ground is subjected to the risk of injury during an electrical fault simply by attempting to move toward or away from the grounding point.

Potential Hazard Situations

- Downed wires
- Energized vehicles or tools
- Energized, grounded trees or tree limbs

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.
- Tree workers using ladders, platforms, and aerial devices, including insulated aerial devices, are subject to the same minimum approach distances as other tree workers.
• Aerial devices brought into contact with energized electrical conductors shall be considered energized. Contact with the vehicle and/or any attached equipment such as brush chippers must be avoided.
• Workers must never assume that a conductor lying on the ground is de-energized unless a utility representative on-site has confirmed that it is so.

Escaping Step Potential Hazards
• Use very short, shuffling steps, or move away from the electrical fault keeping both feet close together.
• Avoid taking large steps.
• Avoid direct or indirect contact with any objects as you exit the hazard area.

For Further Information
TCIA: www.tcia.org
OSHA Tree Care Industry Safety & Health Topics Page: http://www.osha.gov/SLTC/treecare/index.html

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