



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A safety training program provided by the local utility helped a Department of Public Works employee avoid electrocution during a roadway incident. The training enabled the employee to remain calm, composed, and respond appropriately until the utility and first responders could secure the scene and de-energize a downed power line. Whether regularly scheduled or in response to a specific incident, employee training helps keep safety awareness high and instills good habits.

SCENARIO

Earlier in the year, Public Works management had scheduled an electrical safety training session provided by CL&P (now Eversource Energy); the training was prompted by a fatal incident involving a downed power line in a nearby town.

That winter, a snowplow was traveling on a state roadway when it ran over a downed power line. The live power line became entangled in the truck's wheels.

The driver, a young new-hire, stayed inside the truck as he had been instructed during the training session. He reported to Police Dispatch that the live power lines were arcing, smoking and burning. The utility, Police Department, and Fire Department responded quickly. The utility crew was able to de-energize the power lines and remove it from underneath the truck before it caught fire. Three of the truck tires were destroyed from the electricity and heat from the power line.

LESSONS LEARNED

- **Safety training saves lives.** There is often no time to think during an emergency, and instinctive reactions may be wrong. Safety training helps ingrain safe work habits and awareness of what to do in an emergency.
- **Use hazard assessments to develop safety training programs.** Downed power lines are only one of the many hazards DPW and other municipal workers face. Snowplow operators, in particular, spend long hours behind the wheel in severe weather conditions. The driver in this incident knew what to do because his department

learned from another incident and scheduled training time for their employees.

- **Engage outside resources for training support.** The department recognized that the utility was the expert and made good use of the safety training programs they provide.
- **Scheduling training for new-hires, as well as refresher training for all.** Training is especially important for inexperienced employees. Periodic refresher training keeps safety awareness high and builds good safety habits throughout the department.

SAVINGS

The driver in this incident was able to go home at the end of his shift without injury, an incalculable savings to him, his family, the department, and community. The cost of the property loss associated was limited to the minor damage to the vehicle and its tires.

RESOURCES:

- Training programs provided by your local utilities.
- CIRMA Snowplow Safety and other OSHA Safety Training & Education programs.

For more information on this topic, please contact your CIRMA Risk Management Consultant. Visit our training schedule at [CIRMA.org/Training & Education Programs](http://CIRMA.org/Training&EducationPrograms) page for a list of current training programs.