

# Safety Information For Scaffolders & Building Contractors

The erection of scaffolding too close to live electricity conductors can place you, your staff and the public at serious risk of potentially fatal personal injury.

**KEEP AWAY FROM POWER LINES.**



**Jersey Electricity**  
Energy for everyone



# In the UK, people are killed and injured each year due to accidental contact with overhead power lines.

There are more than 75km of electricity overhead lines crossing the countryside in Jersey. Often unnoticed, they are essential to provide electricity to the rural communities in all 12 parishes. In the UK, overhead lines carry voltages ranging from 230 volts (domestic voltage) up to 400,000 volts but in Jersey, overhead lines are restricted to 230/400 volts, which can still provide a lethal shock.

In the UK, approximately five people die every year due to accidental contact with overhead power lines, and it is important that trades that work near or around the overhead line environment have a clear understanding of the associated risks and precautions.

This leaflet provides a basic guide to maximise your chances of remaining safe when working or planning scaffolding activities, near or around overhead electricity lines.

## General key points

- In Jersey, electricity overhead lines are restricted to 230/400 volts, which can still provide a lethal shock.
- Never assume that electrical equipment is dead, even if the wires have fallen or broken.
- Remember - the power can be switched back on at any time, without warning.
- Touching electricity wires or objects/ persons in contact with the wires can be fatal.
- Even the 230 volt overhead lines can produce 10,000 times more current than is required to kill a person.
- Electricity can jump gaps.
- Trees, string, ropes, suspension lines and water can conduct electricity.
- Rubber boots will not protect you.
- Most overhead electricity wires are not insulated.
- Don't assume wires on wooden poles are telephone wires.



## LOOK FOR THE SIGNS

- Electricity poles are usually fitted with yellow 'Danger of Death' notices. Please take notice of these.
- It is dangerous to dismiss the lines as merely a telephone wire - it is very difficult to tell telephone and electricity wires apart.
- The best way to control the risk from live electricity lines is to consider the issue in your planning process. Get into the habit of taking a good look around for power lines every time you visit a new site.

- It is very difficult to judge the height of lines, so do not attempt to do so.
- Always assume that all overhead lines carry live electricity and are dangerous.
- Consider adding a check box on the pre-construction phase plan for power lines safety.
- Make sure all of your staff and contractors are made aware of the risks from power lines.
- If you have any doubts at any stage of your works, always contact Jersey Electricity on 505460.
- To minimise any delays please give Jersey Electricity as much notice as possible.
- Don't forget before starting work, look up and look around.
- If in doubt **stop and stay away**.

## What are the risks to you?

Overhead electricity lines are erected above a statutory minimum height that, in normal circumstances place them safely out of reach. However, anyone carrying long scaffold poles/

erecting or working on tall structures is at increased risk of contact with live conductors.



## How could this happen?

In recent years, **several people have been injured or killed** when erecting or working on scaffolding structures. This happened because they, or the items they were carrying, inadvertently came into contact with or too close to live overhead lines.

Also, any scaffolding that is too close to, or in contact with, live electricity conductors could itself become live and this could pose a serious, potentially fatal, hazard to anyone in the vicinity on the ground.

## What you can do about it

Before setting up any scaffolding it is important that you look up and look around.

Advise Jersey Electricity (505460) of any proposed works within 10m of overhead power lines.

Do not erect scaffolding within 3 metres of an overhead power line. Contact Jersey Electricity for advice. There may be a requirement to cover the line for safety.

Even if the scaffolding is more than 3 metres from an overhead line, take care when carrying and erecting long scaffolding poles.

Never carry long scaffolding poles vertically - always carry them horizontally.

Never attach or tie any scaffolding to power line wood poles, pylons or electrical equipment.

Never attempt to cover, remove or re-site power lines yourself if they are in the way of scaffolding. This must only be done by trained Jersey Electricity personnel.

Even if the lines have been covered or shrouded remember that the covering is generally only designed to protect against inadvertent contact - do not subject any lines to any heavy or prolonged contact or wear.



# EMERGENCY PROCEDURE

What to do if your scaffolding comes into contact with an overhead line:

**Never touch overhead power line conductors.**

**Assume the line/wires are live,** even if they are not sparking.

**Remember the wires can become live again without notice,** even if they are dead initially. This may occur automatically after a few seconds, or up to several hours later if Jersey Electricity is not aware the line has been damaged.

**Call the emergency services.** Give them your location as accurately as you can. Tell them that there are electricity wires involved and ask them to inform Jersey Electricity.

**Move away as quickly as possible** if any of your equipment or vehicles make contact with an electricity wire or is close to a damaged overhead wire. Stay away until the emergency services or Jersey Electricity arrive.

**Be aware, keep clear.** Once a wire is on the ground you do not have to touch it to be killed. The current may travel a significant distance through the ground and even further if the wire has fallen on a fence or other metallic objects.

If you are stood on a scaffolding structure that is in contact with a line it is best you **remain stationary,** stood on the boards away from the metal poles.

Ensure everyone else stands clear.

If staying on a scaffold structure would put you in serious danger (eg it is likely to collapse) always **JUMP clear** rather than stepping off. Jump as far away as you can, landing on your feet and then move away as quickly as possible. **Make sure you do not touch the scaffolding and the ground at the same time.**

**Never touch any equipment you suspect might be touching an electricity line,** including vehicles, materials or any part of a scaffold structure, even if you think the line is dead.

A Jersey Electricity engineer will confirm when the power has been turned off allowing the rescue to proceed safely.

Do not allow anyone to approach the scaffolding until it is confirmed safe to do so by Jersey Electricity engineers.

## BE AWARE, KEEP CLEAR.

For more information, call our  
Customer Care Team 8am to 6pm,  
Mon to Fri on **505460** or visit  
**[www.jec.co.uk](http://www.jec.co.uk)**



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