

Scaffolding near overhead powerlines

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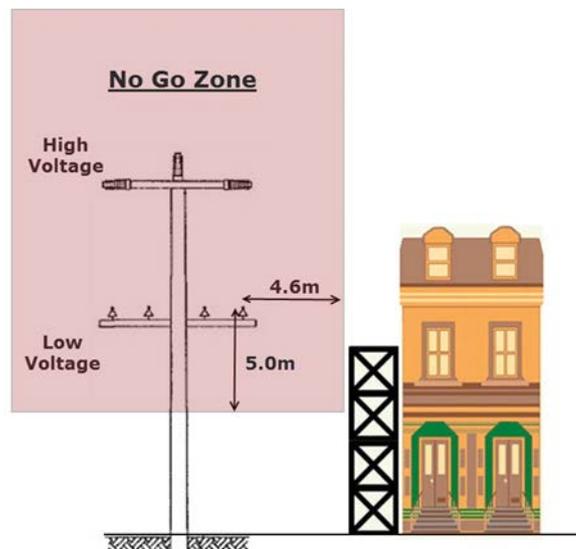
Guideline

Erecting, dismantling and use of scaffold near overhead powerlines

If the erected scaffold or erection process causes scaffold components to come anywhere above or within 5 metres below and 4.6 metres horizontally to the side electrical powerline and, then a Permit to Work (PTW) from the power distribution company may be required for the work to proceed.

To ensure workers are not put at risk from overhead powerlines during the erecting and dismantling, or use of the scaffold; it is essential the power distribution company is contacted for advice and information if the scaffold or components will be within the No Go Zone (see diagram below).

Image 1: Scaffolding No Go Zone



Note: For service cables guidance please refer to ESV document "Erecting, dismantling and use of scaffold near overhead service lines".

Energy Safe Victoria (ESV) and Worksafe Victoria consider that the use of an 'ESV Spotter' is **not** an adequate measure to control No Go Zone risks during the erection and dismantling of scaffolding. It is recognised that uncontrolled movement of the scaffold sections may result in a dangerous or hazardous situation, depending on the specific site conditions.

A Permit to Work (PTW) condition imposed by the power distribution company may require a competent person to act as an observer for warning against any unsafe approach or non-compliance with the PTW conditions. The competent person must have no other duties during the time they are required to observe the works and be able to immediately direct works to cease if they observe that any of the conditions set out in the PTW are not being met.

The power distribution company may recover costs associated with providing safe access through an agreed contractual arrangement.

General requirements when using scaffold near service lines

1. A Safe Work Method Statement (SWMS) must be completed prior to the commencement of any scaffolding work near overhead powerlines. The SWMS should include what actions are required in the event of an accidental contact with powerlines.
2. It is essential in planning for safety to seek information and advice from the power distribution company prior to undertaking any scaffolding work in the No Go Zone. Work may only be carried out in accordance with any conditions listed on the Permit To Work (PTW) once issued by the power company.
3. Electrical powerlines should be de-energised when erecting or dismantling scaffold within the No Go Zone however, this may be varied by the power distribution company depending on specific site and equipment condition and other risk controls that can be applied.
4. Where the PTW conditions require a suitably competent person to observe the work being undertaken, this person must:
 - understand how the specific scaffolding is erected
 - understand how the components are assembled
 - have suitable vision and communication to be able to observe and warn against any hazardous situation
 - understand the conditions detailed in the power companies permit
 - understand the SWMS controls and how these will ensure that the power companies permit conditions are maintained and complied with
 - have no other duties whilst observing the work.
5. In some circumstances hoarding/shade cloth may be required to be secured to the face and or ends of the scaffold as a barrier.
 - Hoarding can be 9mm marine ply, 12mm C/D construction ply, concrete form ply or similar. Shade cloth must be of an industrial grade.
 - Fitted sheets of hoarding/shade cloth need to be installed in a manner to minimise the gaps, this will prevent inadvertent protrusion of materials that could contact live conductors. Effective risk management controls shall be applied with regard to any gaps in the structure.
 - Permit conditions may require the hoarding / shade cloth to have the top edge extend above the work platform adjacent to the electrical line.

How to find your power distribution company

1. You should be able to identify the electricity distribution company from the electricity bill for the property, or
2. Go to the website link below and type in the suburb and the distribution company/s for that area will be displayed along with the contact phone number. In some areas there may be more than one power distribution company that supplies the suburb. This will be resolved by discussion with one of the companies.

<http://jemena.com.au/outages/find-my-distributor.aspx>

Contact numbers for power distribution company enquiries

CitiPower	13 12 80
Jemena	13 16 26
Powercor	13 24 12
AusNet Services	13 17 99
United Energy	13 20 99
Yarra Trams	1800 800 007
Metro Trains	1800 800 007