

TOOLBOX TALK

Topic: Overhead Power Lines

REASON

Overhead power lines are easy to miss—but one mistake can cause serious injury or death.

WHY

Electricity can kill without warning. You don't need to touch a power line—just getting too close can be enough.

OUTLINE

Covers the dangers of overhead power lines and how to work safely around them using window cleaning equipment.

THE RISK

- Contact with overhead power lines can result in fatal electric shock or severe burns
- Electricity can flash over if equipment gets too close
- Risk increases when using:
 - Water-fed poles (especially carbon fibre when wet)
 - Ladders (metal or wet surfaces)
 - Long extension tools

KEY SAFETY RULES

1. Treat all lines as LIVE

Never assume a cable is safe. If unsure—do not proceed.

2. Maintain a SAFE DISTANCE

- Minimum 3 metres at all times (GS6 guidance for low voltage)
- Increase distance for higher voltage or unsafe conditions
- If safe distance cannot be achieved → STOP WORK

3. Avoid the Danger Zone

- Do not work directly under overhead lines
- Do not position ladders or poles where they could reach lines

4. Plan Before You Start (Risk Assessment)

- Look up and identify overhead hazards
- Consider:
 - Access routes
 - Equipment height when extended
 - Ground conditions and stability

5. Control Your Equipment

- Always be aware of full pole height
- Never raise poles near or towards overhead lines
- Keep equipment below safe working limits



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6. Weather Awareness

- Wind can move cables or equipment
- Water increases conductivity
- Stop and reassess in unsafe conditions

7. Follow Controls & Seek Advice

- Obey signage, barriers, and exclusion zones
- Contact the Distribution Network Operator (DNO) if required
- Never take risks—stop and escalate

IF SOMETHING GOES WRONG

- Do NOT touch equipment
- Keep others away (minimum 10 metres)
- Call emergency services immediately
- Inform management

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Use these to engage the team or encourage open dialogue.

- What should you check before starting work at a new property?
- Why are water-fed poles particularly dangerous near power lines?
- What is the biggest mistake you could make around overhead cables?
- What should you do if your pole or ladder gets close to a power line?

SIGN IN SHEET

EMPLOYEE NAME	SIGNATURE

