

Powercor Australia Ltd
ACN 064 651 109
ABN 89-064 651 109

Head Office
40 Market Street Melbourne

DX 433 MELBOURNE
www.powercor.com.au

Address all correspondence to:
Locked Bag 14090
Melbourne Victoria 8001

For all media enquiries:
24-Hour Media Service:
Ph: (03) 9683 4342
Fax: 03) 9683 4899



MEDIA RELEASE

2 July 2010

POWERCOR WARNS OF ELECTRICAL SAFETY THREAT FOLLOWING SPATE OF EXCAVATOR INCIDENTS

Powercor are urging people working with excavating equipment to take extra care when operating them near electricity networks. This follows seven serious incidents where small excavators have made contact with overhead and underground electrical assets in the last month.

These incidents put operators at significant risk of electric shock while also damaging Powercor's distribution network.

Small excavators are being used increasingly by construction crews, plumbers, cable layers and other small industrial operators undertaking digging and earth moving works.

These seven electrical incidents have been spread widely across urban and regional areas including Werribee, Tarneit, Altona, Batesford, Melton, Horsham and Warracknabeal.

Powercor Regional Asset Manager Ian Gillingham said operators of excavation equipment should consider the location of all electrical assets in the vicinity before starting work, including all infrastructure located overhead and underground. Additionally, all excavator users should refer to the 'Dial Before You Dig' service to register any works taking place.

"Small excavators are capable of reaching up as high in the air as they are able to dig into the ground. This means the risk of making contact with electrical equipment can be doubled, posing serious risks if operators do not take time to ensure they are working in a safe environment.

"Additionally, when distribution network equipment is damaged it causes significant disruption for all customers when large power outages occur" he said.

Individuals and businesses that cause damage to electrical assets can be held liable. The consequences of causing negligent damage to overhead or underground cables can be severe, and extremely costly.

"There have been far too many of these incidents over the past month. What people are failing to realise is that not assessing the risks and working safely can result in serious injury, or even be fatal' Mr Gillingham said.

Although most of the recent incidents involved contact with electrical equipment while excavators were in use, one incident occurred when a machine stowed for transport on a vehicle hit overhead lines in transit.

This highlights the importance of being alert at all times when using or transporting any large vehicles or equipment near powerlines.

Powercor has also urged all heavy machinery users to obtain the necessary permits and approvals from relevant authorities to learn where overhead and underground assets are located before starting work. Permits to work in the vicinity of Powercor assets can be applied for online at www.powercor.com.au via the “contractors and suppliers” icon.

People wanting further information about operating machinery near overhead or underground powerlines should phone Powercor on 13 22 06. and Dial Before Your Dig on 1100 or www.1100.com.au

Media enquiries: Powercor Australia’s 24-hour media service on 9683 4342