

## Investigation Process

### *What triggers an investigation by the N.C. Department of Labor's Occupational Safety and Health Division?*

- A worker's death.
- Hospitalization of an employee, an amputation or the loss of an eye.
- The department may also receive information of a fatality or catastrophe from media reports or referrals from other government agencies.

### *How is the NCDOL OSH Division notified?*

- An employer must notify NCDOL within eight hours of any work-related fatality. In-patient hospitalizations of one or more employees, any work-related amputation, and any work-related loss of an eye must be reported within 24 hours.

### *What will the investigation focus on?*

- The investigation will usually be limited to the events surrounding the accident unless observations at the site indicate a broader investigation is needed.

### *What will happen during the investigation?*

- An OSH investigator will go to the accident site and collect physical evidence, including photographs.
- The investigator will interview employees, witnesses and management officials about the accident to determine its cause.
- Any violations of safety and health standards will be noted and citations will be issued.

### *How long will the investigation take?*

- An investigation can take anywhere from a few weeks to six months, depending on the complexity of the accident.

### *When are investigation results disclosed?*

- Citations and penalties, if issued, can be released to the public on the issuance date.
- Other contents of the file cannot be released until the case is closed or final order on citations is rendered.



*Employees working near power lines risk exposure to electrical hazards. Employers should take precautions to eliminate the hazards.*

## The Investigation

OSH investigators will seek to determine several factors, including whether:

- Employees maintained a distance of at least 10 feet when working near overhead power lines.
- Employer conducted a jobsite survey to identify hazards such as overhead lines.
- Conductive ladders were not used near overhead lines.
- Employees were trained to recognize and avoid hazards such as overhead power lines.
- Employer designated one person to observe the clearance of equipment operating near overhead lines.
- A buddy system was in place for work near overhead lines.
- Employees working near potential electrical hazards wore proper personal protective equipment.

**Standards:** 29 CFR 1910.269, Electric Power Generation, Transmission and Distribution

**Industry Type:** General Industry

**Accident Type:** Electrocution

**Statistical Data:** In calendar years 2019 and 2020 two worker deaths involved overhead power lines.



*Josh Dobson, Commissioner*

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### *What programs does the Department of Labor have in place to prevent electrocutions?*

**Free training:** Workshops, training and consultation in both English and Spanish.

**Publications:** Brochures and industry guides that address electrical hazards.