

**B**efore you begin moving equipment or working around any power lines, take this quick power line safety quiz:

▶ **True or False?** Power lines kill more workers than any other electrical source.

▶ **True or False?** Power lines are not insulated for contact.

▶ **True or False?** I should keep myself and any equipment I'm using at least ten feet away from any power lines.

▶ **True or False?** I can be electrocuted by a power line even if I am wearing gloves and rubber boots.



## ABOUT ESFI

Founded in 1994 through a joint effort between Underwriters Laboratories Inc. (UL), the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) and the National Electrical Manufacturers Association (NEMA), the Electrical Safety Foundation International (ESFI) is North America's only non-profit organization dedicated exclusively to promoting electrical safety in the home, school and workplace. ESFI is a 501(c)(3) organization funded by electrical manufacturers and distributors, independent testing laboratories, utilities, safety and consumer groups, and trade and labor associations. ESFI sponsors National Electrical Safety Month each May, and engages in public education campaigns and proactive media relations to help reduce property damage, personal injury and death due to electrical accidents. The Foundation does not engage in code or standard writing or lobbying and does not solicit individuals.



The National Safety Council proudly endorses this safety initiative.  
[www.nsc.org](http://www.nsc.org)



**Electrical Safety Foundation International**  
1300 N. 17<sup>th</sup> St., Suite 1847  
Rosslyn, VA 22209  
Phone: 703-841-3229/Fax: 703-841-3329  
E-mail: [info@esfi.org](mailto:info@esfi.org)  
Web: [www.electrical-safety.org](http://www.electrical-safety.org)

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Look Up!

Look Down!

Look Out!



**WORKPLACE POWER LINE SAFETY AWARENESS**



## Look Up! Look Down! Look Out!

### A MESSAGE FROM ESFI SPOKESMAN AND U.S. OLYMPIC FLAGBEARER CLIFF MEIDL...



Cliff Meidl, former U.S. Olympic kayaker and flagbearer at 2000 Games Opening Ceremonies, and power line accident survivor.

" Long before I was an Olympian, I was a 20-year-old plumber's apprentice who nearly lost his life in a buried power line accident on the job. And now after my Olympic experience, I'm here to tell you how important it is to make safety your number one priority on any job.

According to a recent article\*, electrical accidents rank sixth among all causes of work-related deaths in the U.S. One worker is killed by electricity nearly every day, and power lines kill more workers than any other electrical hazard. While construction workers make up only 7% of the U.S. workforce, they suffer 44% of the electrical fatalities.

Often, a mobile crane operator who contacts a power line is safer if he can remain in the vehicle's cab to avoid touching both the energized vehicle and the ground. Truck-mounted crane (boom truck) operators working the hoist controls while standing on the ground can be killed or injured if their rig contacts a power line. Nearby workers guiding loads, and even those who are not part of the construction crew, need to stay well clear of an energized vehicle or they, too, can be electrocuted.

Workers using ladders or scaffolds, and those carrying aluminum siding, poles, fencing and even lumber, need to be aware of and keep clear of power lines. And any crew involved in digging, like I was in 1986, need to be aware of power lines below.

To avoid the trauma I experienced—or worse—I urge you, when you're working outside, to look up, look down, and look out! Test your power line safety knowledge and then check out some of the valuable resources listed in this brochure to help keep you safe on the job. I got a second chance...you may not be as lucky."

*Cliff Meidl*

\*"Occupational Electrical Injuries in the U.S., 1992-1998," *Journal of Safety Research* 34 (2003), pp. 241-248.

### Power line safety quiz answers:

- ✓ **True.** Power lines are the single greatest on the job electrical hazard, killing an average of 133 workers per year.
- ✓ **True.** While power lines may have a covering to protect against weather, they are not insulated for contact. Birds can sit on power lines unhurt because they don't represent a path to ground. You and your ladder do.
- ✓ **True.** You don't need to contact a power line to be in danger; electricity can jump, or arc, from a power line to a worker who gets too close. The best insulator is lots of space. Workers should keep themselves and any equipment they're using a minimum of ten feet away from power lines, but far greater safe distances are recommended.
- ✓ **True.** Work gloves and rubber boots offer no protection against contact with a power line. Once again, space, and lots of it, is the best insulator. Only properly trained workers with the appropriate personal protective equipment are allowed to work near live power lines.

### For more information on power line safety, check the following resources:

- The U.S. Dept. of Labor's Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) issues and enforces regulations governing workplace safety and the use of personal protective equipment. Contact OSHA at 1-800-321-OSHA (6742) or on-line at [www.osha.gov](http://www.osha.gov).
- The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) publishes the National Electrical Code (NEC)® in the U.S. For Code related questions, contact the NFPA at 1-800-344-3555 or on the Web at [www.nfpa.org](http://www.nfpa.org).
- The U.S. Centers for Disease Control (CDC) manages an on-line resource called the "Electronic Library of Construction Occupational Safety and Health" or "eLCOSH" at [http://www.cdc.gov/elcosh/docs/hazard/safety\\_electricity.html](http://www.cdc.gov/elcosh/docs/hazard/safety_electricity.html).
- The Construction Safety Council offers "Power Line Hazard Awareness" and "Managing Power Line Hazards" video and classroom training. Contact the CSC at 1-800-552-7744 or visit them on the Web at [www.buildsafe.org](http://www.buildsafe.org).
- Before you do any digging, arrange for a locate through your local utility or your local "one call" number. To find your "one call" number, visit [www.digsafely.com](http://www.digsafely.com) or call 1-888-258-0808. Order a copy of the National Safety Council power line safety tip brochure "Can You Dig It?" through their website [www.nsc.org](http://www.nsc.org).