

## ESAA 45/2002-10-01

**Incident Details:** Staff Struck by Lightning working on new mains

**Date:** 27 September, 2002

**Location:** Coonabarabran

**Summary of Incident:** An ET/LW and an apprentice LW were working aloft in an EWP when a lightning bolt struck either the EWP they were working from or the line they were working on.

**Extent of Injury/Damage:** The apprentice LW received 2<sup>nd</sup> degree burns to 5% of his body and temporarily lost the use of his legs. The ET/LW received minor burns.

**Incident Findings:** The work crew was preparing to tie off a SWER pin pole on a new section of line that had never been connected and could not be connected. During the course of the morning a storm approached with severe lightning and the work crew stopped work while it passed. After the storm passed they recommenced working however an unexpected lightning bolt struck either the EWP or the SWER mains that they were working on. The more seriously injured employee required rescuing from the EWP basket. The ET/LW who carried out the rescue is to be commended for his performance in arranging assistance, performing the rescue and rendering first aid. The ambulance service dispatched a helicopter and the employee was flown to the nearest base hospital where he was treated. A full recovery is expected. Other than possible damage to the tyres of the EWP no other damage has been detected.

**Corrective Actions:** Staff ceased work and the work site was made safe. The EWP was initially withdrawn from service for a detailed inspection. As a result of the incident the front steer tyres will be replaced and the rear tyres will undergo a more detailed inspection and replacement if required. The EWP requires a LV insulation test prior to use on live LV mains.

**Preventative Actions:** Country Energy to develop a procedure for staff that provides guidelines for working in adverse weather conditions.

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