



Safety Advice 05-2002 (NZ)

SCAFFOLD CONTACTING POWERLINES

Workers were installing bird proof flashings on the gable ends of a warehouse. The defendant conducted an initial hazard identification when pricing the contract but did not write it down. Initially envisaged that the work would be done off ladders and as such 11,000 volt lines to the south west of the building were not considered to be a hazard. Subsequently work plans changed and a mobile scaffold was used. Flashings were installed at the north eastern end and the workers then used their work van to tow the scaffold to the south western end of the building. While towing the scaffold it made contact with the power lines injuring the worker who was guiding the scaffold. The worker sustained serious injuries which resulted in their left arm being amputated above the elbow; severe burns to right forearm resulting in loss of movement of that arm; severe burns to scalp, shoulder and right leg requiring skin grafts and the amputation of 3 toes on the right foot and 2½ on the left foot.

OSH prosecuted the company concerned under the HSE Act. The company was fined \$15,000 which was awarded to the victim.

The judge's comments were that the initial hazard ID was not committed to paper, when the work plans changed there was no turning of the company's mind as to whether there were any hazards posed as a result. General deterrence required to ensure that employers conduct proper hazard assessments and make their workplaces as safe as possible.