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## Play It Safe, Know the Law

Oncor Electric Delivery wants you to be aware of the dangers of making contact with power lines. Electricity, powerful enough to kill, will flow through any metal or other conducting object that touches electric lines. For this reason special care must be taken when working near power lines. No one should ever let any object touch an electric line except trained personnel using tools and equipment especially made for this purpose, which have been properly maintained, tested and inspected.

To ensure the safety and the protection of the public, Chapter 752 of the Texas Health and Safety Code makes it unlawful for unauthorized persons to perform work if it is possible during the work for them to move to, or place any objects, within six feet of any high voltage overhead electric line, without first notifying the operator of that electric line (at least 48 hours in advance of beginning any planned work closer to the line than those distances) and arranging with the operator for permission to complete the work. Excerpts from Chapter 752 are in this publication.

**If a violation of these requirements results in physical or electrical contact with a high voltage overhead electric line, persons who committed that violation are liable to the owner or operator of the line for all damages to the facilities and for all liability that the owner or operator incurs as a result of the contact.**

The federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), and the National Electric Safety Code (NEC) also regulate or impose minimum clearance restrictions, relating to work on or around high voltage overhead electric lines. These requirements may be more restrictive than those in Chapter 752. Local codes and ordinances may also apply.

### **Texas Law: Excerpts from Texas Health and Safety Code, Chapter 752**

- (1) "High voltage" means more than 600 volts measured between conductors or between a conductor and the ground.
- (2) "Overhead line" means a bare or insulated electrical conductor installed above ground but does not include a conductor that is de-energized and grounded or that is enclosed in a rigid metallic conduit.

### **§ 752.003. Temporary Clearance of Lines**

- (a) A person, firm, corporation, or association responsible for temporary work or a temporary activity or function closer to a high voltage overhead line than the distances prescribed by this chapter must notify the operator of the line at least 48 hours before the work begins.
- (b) A person, firm, corporation, or association may not begin the work, activity, or function under this section until the person, firm, corporation, or association responsible for the work, activity, or function and the owner or operator, or both, of the high voltage overhead line have negotiated a satisfactory mutual arrangement to provide temporary de-energization and grounding, temporary relocation or raising of the line, or temporary mechanical barriers to separate and prevent contact between the line and the material or equipment or the person performing the work, activity, or function.
- (c) The person, firm, corporation, or association responsible for the work, activity, or function shall pay the operator of the high voltage overhead line the actual expense incurred by the operator in providing the clearance prescribed in the agreement. The operator may require payment in advance and is not required to provide the clearance until the person, firm, corporation, or association responsible for the work, activity, or function makes the payment.
- (d) If the actual expense of providing the clearance is less than the amount paid, the operator of the high voltage overhead line shall refund the surplus amount.

#### **§ 752.004. Restriction on Activities Near Lines**

- (a) Unless a person, firm, corporation, or association effectively guards against danger by contact with the line as prescribed by Section 752.003, the person, firm, corporation, or association, either individually or through an agent or employee, may not perform a function or activity on land, a building, a highway, or other premises if at any time it is possible that the person performing the function or activity may:
- (1) move or be placed within six feet of a high voltage overhead line while performing the function or activity; or
  - (2) bring any part of a tool, equipment, machine, or material within six feet of a high voltage overhead line while performing the function or activity.
- (b) A person, firm, corporation, or association may not require an employee to perform a function or activity prohibited by Subsection (a).

#### **§ 752.005. Restriction on Operation of Machinery and Placement of Structures Near Lines**

- Unless a person, firm, corporation, or association effectively guards against danger by contact with the line as prescribed by Section 752.003, the person, firm, corporation, or association, either individually or through an agent or employee, may not:
- (1) erect, install, transport, or store all or any part of a house, building, or other structure within six feet of a high voltage overhead line;
  - (2) install, operate, transport, handle, or store all or any part of a tool, machine, or equipment within six feet of a high voltage overhead line; or
  - (3) transport, handle, or store all or any part of supplies or materials within six feet of a high voltage overhead line.

#### **§ 752.007. Criminal Penalty**

- (a) A person, firm, corporation, or association or an agent or employee of a person, firm, corporation, or association commits an offense if the person, firm, corporation, association, agent, or employee violates this chapter.
- (b) An offense under this section is punishable by a fine of not less than \$100 or more than \$1,000, confinement in jail for not more than one year, or both.

#### **§ 752.008. Liability for Damages**

If a violation of this chapter results in physical or electrical contact with a high voltage overhead line, the person, firm, corporation, or association that committed the violation is liable to the owner or operator of the line for all damages to the facilities and for all liability that the owner or operator incurs as a result of the contact.