

**B&A**

**the forensic engineer**

## **MANLIFT CONTACTS UTILITY LINE – DOUBLE AMPUTATION**

A young man was employed by a roofing construction company working at a tomato processing plant. He was directed to remove the gutters from the building. In the course of his work, he received severe electrical injuries requiring amputation of both arms. He was, at all times, removing the said gutters in the fashion directed of him by his employer construction company. It was alleged that the utility's 17,000V power lines were defective in the way they were designed, constructed and inspected and therefore created a hazardous condition, which caused the injury and damage to the plaintiff, including the loss of his arms and severe injuries to both knees and legs. The lines were too close to the building and this violated California law.

While the roofing construction company was cited for several OSHA violations, including not providing proper training on hazard recognition, the focus was on the utility's line height and clearance from the buildings, as required by the state's electrical code. Brosz and Associates' forensic investigation included, amongst other activities, a site visit to inspect the accident site, the basket, and the manlift, and take measurements and photographs. In this case, measurements determined that the overhead conductor was too close to the building. The rules required six feet of clearance.

Our investigative team determined that workers using ladders, lifts or scaffolding at the southwest corner of the building could not perform their ordinary duties without coming impermissibly close (within 10 feet) to the 3 phase overhead distribution line due to the location of 13.5 inch deep columns along the side of the building. The subject line presented an immediate danger to workers providing foreseeable maintenance to the upper portion of the building under ordinary circumstances. The experts at Brosz and Associates were instrumental in the victim receiving a favorable settlement from the utility.

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