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TO: MEUW Members
FROM: Lisa Haen, Safety and Health Manager
DATE: September 3, 2010
RE: New OSHA 20' Rule for Overhead Power Lines; effective November 8, 2010

According to a new OSHA rule change, effective November 8th, 2010, OSHA created a new Subpart CC in the OSHA Part 1926 construction standard. Because overhead line contact remains one of the leading causes of incidents on construction sites, the new rule changes the long standing 10' rule for crane and derrick operations and requires crane and derrick operators to INCREASE the approach distance to 20' when working near overhead power lines.

Although this will mainly affect operations for private sector contractors, utilities may be asked, by contractors, to de-energize and ground lines if operations require encroaching into the 20' distance. The new standard outlines several elements of compliance and as always, pre-planning, positioning of cranes, barricades, insulated links and spotters are all best practices that contractors should be following to maintain a safe work site.

How will this new rule affect MEUW member utilities? According to OSHA, this new standard does not apply to work covered under the Power Generation Transmission and Distribution Standard (OSHA 1910.269) and/or Subpart V (OSHA 1926), however work covered under these standards require "qualified" persons who are trained in accordance with those standards and entirely different rules and clearance distances apply for these qualified workers.

For more information about the new OSHA 20' rule please go to Hi-line's website at http://shop.hilineco.com/newOSHA_8-2010.html or OSHA's website <http://osha.gov/cranes-derricks/index.html> to find their fact sheet. In addition, the Job Training and Safety Instructors will be addressing this new rule during their safety training sessions and we will keep you informed as new information becomes available.