

\$1 Million Settlement in Roofer Electrocution

A roofing contractor was killed when he was electrocuted while standing on scaffolding located near electrical conductors. Bad weather caused a power line to break and damaged a transformer near the roofer's job site. The responding power company informed the roofing company that their scaffolding was too close to the overhead lines and that the scaffold would have to be removed. When the power company left, the roofing company instructed their employees to complete the work, so the scaffold was put back up and the roofers returned to work. The man was on the re-erected scaffolding when he was killed.

Robson Forensic was retained to evaluate the power company's response to the work being performed by the man's employer and to determine if the proximity of the electrical conductors was a cause of the man's death.

Our expert showed that the power company failed to follow accepted standards when they erected the conductor pole. It was placed too close to the building being worked on by the roofer and was not arranged in a manner that provided proper building to line clearance. It was the proximity of the conductors to the building that caused the man's electrocution.

Given the power company's knowledge, means, and opportunity, they should have made the work site safe before leaving. They failed to do so when they restored power to the conductor knowing that it would not be possible for the roofers to remove the scaffolding and maintain a safe distance from the reenergized conductor. They could have chosen instead to install blanket insulators on the feeder run to protect the workers. Additionally, they failed to make it clear that work could not continue in the area because it was dangerous and they should not have left the location until the worksite was secure. Their failures were a cause of the man's death.

This case settled for more than \$1 million.

To email the experts involved with this case: [Jim Orosz](#) with [Energy](#)