Worker Electrocuted While Repaving Highway



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A 44-year-old transportation worker died after being jolted with 7,200 volts of electricity while repaving a highway in Colorado.

Rodger Bell was working on the back of an asphalt spreader, or lay-down machine, when he was jolted with electricity. It was reported that a truck dumping asphalt into the spreader came into contact with an overhead power line. Apparently the truck shifted when the load emptied out, and the raised dump bed moved forward to touch the wire.

There was no negligence on the part of the driver, reported state trooper Josh Boden.

The power traveling through the truck was so great that the tires exploded, and the asphalt beneath melted and turned to glass. The electricity also traveled through the spreader, which was in contact with the truck, shocking four employees. Three received minor burns and injuries, but Bell was critically hurt. He was taken by helicopter to an Albuquerque hospital, and died that night.

If you can see a power line, keep well clear of it. Equipment operators have to be especially careful. If you're digging, there are power lines in the ground. If you're raising a boom, crane or cherry picker there are wires in the air. To stay safe, here are some easy precautions you can take:
– Know where they are: Look for power lines when you start work.
– Ask the utility company to shut off power or insulate the wires while you're working.
– Maintain a minimum distance of 10 feet (3. 5 meters) from power lines.

Source: The Durango Herald, Colorado, July 4 2006