



**National Fire Fighter Near-Miss Reporting System  
Reports Related Heavy/Commercial Vehicle Extrication**

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10-748	Power lines fall on truck	2
10-394	Extrication tool traps firefighter's hand during call	2

**10-1272**

**Event Description**

We responded to an overturned two-axle commercial truck that was hauling United States mail. It was an early morning call. It was raining hard, we had poor lighting and the incident occurred on a freeway off-ramp. The driver was ejected and there was cargo scattered along the railroad frontage. A power pole (property of Railroad Company) was sheared off and there were lines down on and under the vehicle. We also had fuel leaking and the ignition was in the "on" position.

Due to the position of the vehicle and the power lines, responders were unable to make access to the cab. This caused problems addressing the fuel leak, disconnecting the truck's batteries and performing salvage on the cargo. It took four hours to get a lineman from the railroad company out to the incident.

Our personnel have always "known" that those old dilapidated power lines and poles along the railroad frontage were abandoned and dead. It seemed silly to follow the protocol for downed power lines, but we did. Had the driver remained in the vehicle, we were not sure how we would have managed a safe extrication. The lineman from the railroad company also thought that those lines were dead until he put a meter on them. We were all surprised to find that each of those four bare wires carried 110 volts. We were also very grateful that we observed the protocol for downed power lines.

**Lessons Learned**

Never trust downed power lines.

Follow protocol.

Assume that power lines are hot until it can be confirmed otherwise.

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**10-394**

**Event Description**

Fire department units responded to the report of a motor vehicle collision with entrapments on the onramp to a 4-lane divided highway. Upon arrival to the scene, first arriving units found a full size pickup truck that had driven under the rear of a parked tractor trailer. The front seat occupant of the pickup truck was pinned in by the 18 wheeler's trailer and the compressed pickup truck roof. Department personnel utilized hydraulic extrication tools to remove the pickup truck roof but found that the patient's legs were pinned by parts of the 18-wheeler's trailer. A firefighter was using an older set of hydraulic cutters that was not strong enough to cut the metal on the 18-wheeler's trailer. The blades dug in and then caused the cutting tool to pin the operator's hand between the cutters and debris. The operator was pinned in a manner that caused him to continue operating the cutters, which in turn increased the pressure on his hand.

Another firefighter had been standing by at the hydraulic pump (as per department procedure) and was able to turn the pump off and relieve the pressure on the hydraulic

lines when the situation was recognized. The injured firefighter was then able to remove his hand without difficulty.

### **Lessons Learned**

Ensure that hydraulic tools are capable of being used on different types of metals. With newer vehicle construction, it is imperative to ensure that the right equipment is used for the job.

It is important to have a person standing by at the hydraulic pump in the event that a situation such as this occurs again in the future.

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