

NEWS RELEASE

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Cal/OSHA Cites Employer for Electrocution Fatality and Serious Injury

Van Nuys—Cal/OSHA announced today that water well services company M&W Pumps, Inc., from Santa Maria was at fault for an electrocution accident that killed one worker and seriously injured another in June when a pump hoist made contact with a live overhead power line.

The investigation revealed that the team failed to maintain the minimum 10-foot distance requirement to prevent accidental contact with overhead lines carrying between 600 – 50,000 volts.

“When employers send their workers near overhead power lines with hoists or other high equipment, they must take special precautions to keep their workers safe,” said Cal/OSHA Chief Juliann Sum. “If M&W Pumps had put required safety measures in place, these workers’ lives would not have been put at risk.”

The two workers were using the pump hoist on June 6 to install an underground well on rural land east of Santa Maria. Cesar Montelongo-Pulido, a 21-year old rig operator’s assistant, was holding the hoist line while Daniel Moreno, a 25-year old rig operator, manned the controls on the hoist. The pump hoist made contact with a live 12,000 volt power line overhead during the operation, killing Montelongo-Pulido and severely injuring Moreno.

Cal/OSHA cited M&W Pumps, Inc. \$16,895 for six violations including one serious and one serious accident-related in nature. M&W Pumps, Inc. was found at fault for failing to follow high voltage safety orders, requiring that employers notify the high-voltage power line company if equipment will approach closer than 10 feet – this serious violation was determined to contribute directly to the accident.

The other serious violation was issued for failing to evaluate hazards and implement necessary safeguards to minimize workers’ exposure to harm, including the potential contact with overhead power lines. Serious violations are cited when there is a realistic possibility that death or serious harm could result from the actual hazardous condition.

Citations were also issued for the employer's failure to mark controls on the pump hoist to indicate the function or direction of motion, and for failure to establish a program of preventative maintenance of the pump hoist.

Cal/OSHA has an extensive online library of [safety fact sheets and publications](#) such as the [Cal/OSHA Guide to Electrical Safety](#) on how to work safely near overhead power lines.

Cal/OSHA helps protect workers from health and safety hazards on the job in almost every workplace in California. [Cal/OSHA's Consultation Services Branch](#) provides free and voluntary assistance to employers and employee organizations to improve their health and safety programs. Employers should call (800) 963-9424 for assistance from Cal/OSHA Consultation Services.

Employees with work-related questions or complaints may contact DIR's Call Center in English or Spanish at 844-LABOR-DIR (844-522-6734). The California Workers' Information line at 866-924-9757 provides recorded information in English and Spanish on a variety of work-related topics. Complaints can also be filed confidentially with [Cal/OSHA district offices](#).

Members of the press may contact Erika Monterroza or Peter Melton at (510) 286-1161, and are encouraged to [subscribe to get email alerts](#) on DIR's press releases or other departmental updates.

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