

# Illegal power connections under spotlight

PRETORIA: Illegal power connections have come under the spotlight as Eskom's National Electricity Safety Week continues.



Image: [www.freedigitalphotos.net](http://www.freedigitalphotos.net)

An electricity connection is considered illegal when any connection is made to the Eskom network without Eskom's permission. This can range from connecting to a mini-substation to connecting a neighbour through your personal meter or electricity board.

"We have identified that the biggest contributors to electrical accidents, injuries and fatalities in South Africa are contact with low-hanging, unsafe connections, vandalism, illegal power connections, and cable theft," Eskom Corporate Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) Operational Manager, Alex Stramrood, said on Wednesday, 13 August 2014.

The power parastatal launched the National Electricity Safety Week on Monday in Winterveld outside Pretoria. The campaign, which sees Eskom officials visiting various parts of the country, including Philippi and Piet Retief, educates the public on the safe use of electricity, as well as inform them on the risks associated with the practice of illegal connections.

"Philippi residents and businesses regularly connect to the Eskom network illegally. Not only is this dangerous for the individual making the connection, but it also puts the rest of the community at risk," said Stramrood.

Communities can immediately report unsafe electricity connections to 08600 37566 or 0800 112 722 and by reporting electricity theft to Operation Khanyisa by sending an SMS to Crime Line on 32211. The service is completely anonymous and costs only R1/SMS.

"We have found that most people understand that connecting illegally can be dangerous, but they continue to use illegal connections. That is why we are travelling across the country to educate people regarding the potential risks," Stramrood said.

Illegal connections are dangerous for several reasons, the most common of which is the lack of safety features associated with the connections.

When electrical connections are made by untrained professionals, the cables often lack protective insulation.

In addition, illegal connections are not suspended at a safe height above ground. This means that children, animals and even adults often touch these unprotected wires accidentally, causing electrocution, which can cause injury or even fatalities.

Eskom believes that the only way to truly eradicate electricity theft is through a coordinated effort between the electricity supplier and communities.

To help protect children, Eskom encourages parents to ensure their children:

- Avoid playing near power lines or substations.
- Do not fly kites near power lines. If a kite gets stuck in a power line, do not try to retrieve it; you could be hurt.
- Never climb trees or other structures near power lines.

If your child encounters an illegal connection, avoid the area and report it immediately.

The initiative will run until Sunday.

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>