

Energy Safety Week's focus on illegal power connections

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



Eskom's Alex Stamrood is travelling to remote villages and settlements around South Africa to explain the dangers of illegal electricity connections to township residents. Image: [AgriTV](#)

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 the electricity board supply 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 Stamrood, said.

The power parastatal launched the National Electricity Safety Week at the beginning of the week 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 informs them on the risks

associated with 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 Stamrood.

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

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

Illegal connections are dangerous for several reasons, the most common of which is the lack of safety 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, injury and even death.

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



Illegal electricity connections pose dangers to the community and can damage Eskom's power grid. It is a criminal offence to make illegal connections and steal electricity. Image: [Operation Khanyisa](#)