

Farmer lives after a 33,000-volt shock

A 19-year-old Clive man is lucky to be alive after suffering an electric shock and severe burns from a 33,000-volt power line — the highest voltage used by the Hawke's Bay Electric Power Board.

The man, whose name was not available, was late this morning in a serious condition in the Hastings hospital intensive-care unit suffering from shock and severe burns to his legs, arms and hands.

The accident happened just after 2pm yesterday at Paraire Rd, Waipatu, when the man, a farmer, brushed the power line while unloading aluminium irrigation pipes off the back of a truck.

The man, unaware he was parked underneath the power lines, lifted one of the 8-metre long pipes and stood it on its edge when it contacted the power line and gave him a shock, the Hawke's Bay Electric

Power Board duty engineer, Mr Ian Hay, said.

"He is very lucky to be alive. The man was severely shocked and received bad burns. The 33,000 voltage is the highest we use in this district and it could be fatal."

Mr Hay said the accident occurred because the man did not realise the power lines were above him.

Mr Hay said he was not aware of similar accidents like this happening in

Hawke's Bay in the past but he said a number had occurred throughout the country.

"It is becoming quite frequent mainly because the irrigation pipes are so long, but little can be done about it," he said.

"The only thing we can do is to warn farmers to take extreme care when they are working near power lines," he said.

Mr Hay said the power board would be investigating the accident.

High tension lines burn Clive man

A Clive man is in a serious condition in the intensive care unit of Hastings Memorial Hospital today after an incident yesterday when pipes he was unloading from a truck touched 33,000-volt power lines.

A trauma team doctor had to administer pain killers to Garry Hill, 19, before he was rushed to hospital with serious burns to his arms, hands and leg.

Duty engineer for the Hawke's Bay Electric Power Board, Mr Ian Hay, today described the electric shocks Mr Hill received as "severe", and said the fact the pipes were touching dry ground as well as the lines probably saved Hill's life.

Mr Hill was conscious throughout yesterday's incident which happened on a farm on Paraire Road, near Hastings, about 2pm.

Mr Hill was unloading

eight-metre lengths of aluminium irrigation piping from a truck when he received the shock. He had parked the truck under the power lines, and when he took a pipe off the truck he stood it on its end.

When one end touched the high-tension lines, Mr Hill was holding the pipe with both hands and bracing it against his thigh, which caused the burns.

Mr Hay said the dry farm track Mr Hill and the pipe were standing on would have caused a strong resistance to an electric current.

A circuit breaker was activated automatically when the contact occurred, cutting the current.

Mr Hill was initially admitted to the burns unit of Hastings Memorial Hospital, but was later transferred to intensive care when the extent of his injuries was determined.

Shock victim still serious

The 19-year-old Clive man who recieved an electric shock and severe burns from a 33,000-volt power line on Friday afternoon, was still today in a serious condition in the Hastings hospital intensive care unit.

Garry Hill suffered shock and severe burns to his legs, arms and hands when he brushed the power line while unloading aluminium irrigation pipes off the back of a truck.

Shock victim still disabled

A 20-year-old man is still unable to work almost one year after receiving a 33,000 volt shock while working on a farm in Paraire Road, near Hastings.

Farm worker Garry Hill was unloading aluminium irrigation pipes from a truck when they touched overhead high-tension cables.

The shock Mr Hill received inflicted severe burns to his arms, hands and legs.

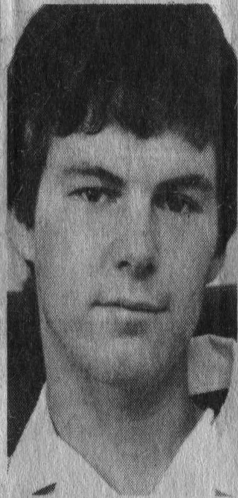
Mr Hill was considered lucky to survive the

shock.

Back at his Richmond Road home, Mr Hill said he was still rehabilitating.

He said it would be another couple of months yet before he could return to work.

Garry knows how lucky power victim was



Garry Hill . . . lucky to have lived.

Nobody knows better than 19-year-old Garry Hill how lucky Mr Eric Smith was last week to escape without serious injuries after indirectly coming into contact with 33,000-volt power lines.

Garry, from Clive, had a similar experience in January. He was not so fortunate and is now seriously disabled by injuries received when an eight-metre irrigation pipe he was holding came close to 33,000-volt power lines above a potato paddock in Paraire Rd, Waipatu.

The power arced into

the pipe and for five seconds ran into Garry's body. He was lucky to have lived.

Garry is still being treated at Hutt Hospital for the injuries he received. He came home for a fortnight last Friday to be with his family. Later this month he returns to the Hutt for treatment that is likely to continue for another 12 months.

He does not want to discuss his injuries.

But he and his family are pleased that Mr Smith

managed to avoid the suffering that can come from contact with high-powered lines.

Garry does not blame anybody for his accident. It was just an unfortunate occurrence.

"But I would like to see people made more aware of how dangerous these lines can be," he said.

"Perhaps they could put up more notices, or raise the lines so that there is even less chance of getting close to them."

Garry is adamant that the pipe he was holding did not actually touch the

line. But it was close enough to attract the power.

At the time, a rock had lodged in the section of the pipe Garry was holding. He had one end in the air as he tried to get the rock out.

Shortly after the accident Garry was rushed to the Hastings hospital where he remained for 10 days before being transferred to the Hutt.

Garry's parents — Cyril and Betty — say the last few months have been extremely traumatic.

But they have been heartened by the support from friends, and cannot speak highly enough of the nurses and doctors at both hospitals where Garry has been treated.

Mrs Hill says she only hopes that people who hear about Garry's ordeal — and the fortunate escape Mr Smith had — will realise the extreme care that must be taken when dealing with electricity.

"We take so much for granted until something like this happens," she said.