

Safety First



Downed Lines Mean Danger

Even when they seem to be in perfect order, power lines pose serious threats to humans who come in contact with them. Downed power lines are even more dangerous because they are easier for people to reach.

A common misconception is that once a power line is down, there is no more electricity running through it. That is not the case.

Just because a power line is partially disconnected from a utility pole does not mean that it is not active. Electricity is always looking for a path to the ground. If you are in the way, it will travel through you and cause serious shock or even electrocution.

Here are some safety tips to help prevent deadly accidents from happening with downed power lines.

- Always consider any power line energized, even if the utility pole has been knocked down by a storm or an accident.
- If you see a downed line, call 911 and your electricity provider.
- Never go near a downed line and try to keep others away from the line. Even if you are not touching a live wire, electricity can jump several feet.
- Make sure you are not standing near water that is around a fallen line, as water is an excellent conductor of electricity.
- If a downed line has landed on your car, stay where you are and try not to touch anything metal. If the car is on fire or you need to get out of the car for any other reason, jump away and free of the car so that you are not touching the car and the ground at the same time.
- Never drive over downed power lines.
- If someone has touched a live line, call for emergency assistance. Do not attempt to help or move the victim by touching them. You may also be shocked if you come in contact with someone touching the line.
- Watch out for weak tree limbs or utility poles that may fall and cause electrical problems after a storm has passed.