

STORM RESTORATION SAFETY



Linemen are often required to work during storms when power outages occur. These conditions can increase the level of danger already associated with many of the hazardous responsibilities that you encounter on a daily basis. Therefore, it is imperative that you understand the dangers associated with this type of work.

A majority of utility companies have plans in place prior to a major storm occurring. Familiarize yourself with those plans. Sometimes you may also be required to perform advance preventative work to reduce the likelihood of outages and damage in some areas in preparation for a storm's arrival.

Whenever you are tasked with a restoration effort, it is important that you first survey the storm damage that has caused the outage and establish and maintain regular communication with local area work centers regarding the job.

Before beginning any work, you must participate in a briefing identifying job hazards and the manner in which the task will be executed. You need to determine the actual or maximum nominal voltage of conductors or equipment that you will be working on. You also need to verify the potential arc flash energy at each specific work location.

Additionally, the National Electric Safety Code (NESC) requires an arc flash hazard analysis be conducted for individuals working on or near energized lines or equipment. In the event the arc flash energy is greater than 2 cal/cm², you must wear protective clothing that has an effective arc rating not less than the anticipated level of arc energy.

Whenever these precautions cannot be made, make every effort to properly ground and tag equipment that is supposed to be worked on. In the event any line clearance is necessary as a result of the storm, you must make sure that it is done in compliance with all state and federal regulations in addition to your company's safety policies and procedures.

If you are working during a storm, wear appropriate clothing for the weather conditions. You must also always wear the appropriate protective work attire for the job that you are required to perform.

Make sure that you do not overwork or perform any task when overly fatigued. When you are tired, you are more likely to make mistakes. Never sleep in a truck or on the job. It is imperative to have a minimum of 8 hours off duty during each 24-hour period. For multi-day restorations, consider longer rest periods or scheduled days off to insure properly rested employees.

Always monitor the weather! You need to be aware of potential work and dangers created by storms and storm damage.



DISCUSSION QUESTION

When is acceptable to sleep in a truck or on the job?