

DOWNED POWER LINES



In the event of an emergency you might encounter a downed line. If this occurs, have emergency contact numbers handy. It is important to make sure 911 is in service for the area or have the direct line for police, fire and emergency medical services.

You might be familiar with working on these lines, however wait for the utility or first responders. Do not attempt deal with the situation. Be sure you have a contact number for the local utility and identify anyone on the site that has CPR/ First Aid training and that can assist in an emergency.

Employers are required to have personnel trained in basic first aid, when medical services are not within a reasonable distance. Additionally, NFPA 70E requires all employees working on or near energized circuits or parts to be trained

in first aid and CPR. In the event you come upon a fallen wire, maintain a clearance distance of at least 10 feet. Call emergency services and the utility to disconnect power.

Exercise extreme caution if the ground is wet or other conductive materials are present. Moisture in the soil or pools of water can be conductive and will expand the area energized by the fallen wire. Fence posts or guardrails in contact with the energized wire will also carry current. Energized areas may include the earth's surface around the fence or guardrail.

Always keep motorists, pedestrians and others away from the energized area. Whenever possible, set up barricades. Never attempt to touch the wire or anything in contact with the wire. When the wire has fallen on a vehicle or equipment, it may be arcing, so smoking and fire may occur. Stay in the vehicle or instruct others to do so. Wait for the local utility to cut power before trying to exit.

In the event you must exit the vehicle, it should be done by leaping with both feet at one time. When doing so try to maintain their balance and get as far away as possible without touching the vehicle. After landing do not run or walk away, shuffle or bunny hop. As the ground will be energized at different levels moving away from the source (i.e. downed line). By minimizing the gap between points of contact with the ground you can help prevent electricity from traveling through you from one energy level to another. However, jumping should only be a last resort.

Whenever you are operating a vehicle or equipment and contact is made, stop the equipment. If it is safe to jump, do so using the precautions noted above. Never return or allow others to return to the vehicle or equipment. After power has been cut, emergency responders can approach victims and render first aid as needed.

DISCUSSION QUESTION

What should you do if you need to jump from a vehicle in contact with a downed line?