



Downed Power Lines

Electrical lines are prevalent throughout this country, and it is not unusual to find them damaged and on the ground or low hanging. Windstorms, vehicle crashes, or power transmission equipment failure can result in an extremely dangerous situation. Downed electrical power lines can carry an electric current strong enough to cause serious injury or even death. A typical overhead power line will carry up to 50,000 volts and some far more. Treat these with the respect they deserve.

Remember the line does not have to be in actual contact with the ground to be dangerous. A drooping power line is just as dangerous. Electricity wants to move from a high voltage zone to a low voltage zone – and it could do that through your body.

Yet every so often we hear of some tragedy where someone has made contact or approached close enough where serious injury or a fatality results. Even people trained or educated in electrical safety can become casualties.

Basic Safety Tips from the Electrical Safety Foundation International:

- If you see a downed power line, move away from it and anything touching it. The ground around power lines – up to 35 feet away - may be energized.
- You cannot tell whether or not a power line is energized just by looking at it. You should assume that all downed power lines are live.
- Never walk under or step over a downed power line.
- The proper way to move away from the power line is to shuffle away with small steps, keeping your feet together and on the ground at all times. This will minimize the potential for a strong electric shock.
- If you see someone who is in direct or indirect contact with the downed line, do not touch the person. You could become the next victim. Call 911 for help.
- Do not attempt to move a downed power line or anything else in contact with it by using an object such as a broom or stick. Even non-conductive materials like wood or cloth, can conduct electricity if even slightly wet.
- Be careful not to touch or step in water near where a downed power line is located. • Do not drive over downed power lines.
- If you must leave your car because it is on fire, jump out of the vehicle with both feet together and avoid contact with both the car and the ground at the same time. Shuffle away from the car.



SOURCE: safetytoolboxtopics.com



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