



A Touchstone Energy* Cooperative 

ELECTRICAL SAFETY TIPS

ELECTRIC LINE SAFETY

In the aftermath of a storm, be aware of hazards presented by downed power lines.

Downed power lines can carry an electric current strong enough to cause serious injury or even death. If you come across a low or fallen line, adhere to the following safety tips:

Respect the power of electricity

First of all, we need to know a few basic things about electricity.

- Electricity always seeks the easiest, most direct path to the ground through conductors like your body, trees, water, metal objects and structures including fences and even gutters and long, tall equipment such as ladders.
- Even low-voltage electric shock can be fatal. Protecting yourself means always remembering that there are no minor risks when dealing with electricity.
- Electric shock and burn injuries may include internal tissue damage that is not immediately apparent. Shock victims often show no visible injuries or only minor burns on the skin, but the internal organs can be critically wounded. Treat these injuries as serious regardless of their appearance.



Hands off electrical equipment

- Remember that even low-voltage electric shock is potentially fatal. To avoid this risk, keep away from electrical equipment and systems.
- Never attempt to disconnect electrical services. This can be an extremely dangerous, even deadly, mistake. Never cut service wires or power lines. Never attempt to remove electrical meters.
- Never touch or attempt to move power lines. Assume

all lines are energized as well as all objects in contact with power lines. Even if lines appear to be insulated, the coating you see is not designed to protect you from shock.

- Additionally, areas around power lines and electrical equipment or objects in contact with them (such as trees, fences or vehicles) should also be treated as energized.
- This includes the ground.
- In dealing with electrical systems, employ a hands-off policy and call South Central Power at 800-282-5064.



Anything touching a power line 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.
- 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.

Downed wires on vehicles and equipment

- The safest place for you if a power line has come down on or near your car, truck, farm or road equipment or safety vehicle is to remain calm and stay put.
- If you **MUST** leave your vehicle because it is on fire, jump clear like a bunny, without touching the vehicle and ground at the same time. Shuffle away with small steps, keeping both feet together and on the ground at all times. Do not run or take long steps.
- Never go back to the vehicle to get your phone, purse or other items.

Keep your distance

- 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. Always remember that objects and even the ground near downed lines may also be energized.
- Transmission lines from large towers require a distance of 100 feet. In any incident involving downed lines, recall that wind as well as electric charge can cause lines to whip and move. Observing these expanded clearances can help protect everyone from the unexpected.
- Never touch or attempt to move fallen lines or objects contacting them. Doing so endangers you and incident victims. Contact South Central Power immediately so they can de-energize the scene.



Substation fires

- Burning electrical equipment is already ruined and will be replaced. The safest course of action is to let it burn.
- Contact South Central and wait for their personnel to arrive. Never attempt to enter a substation without utility personnel present.
- Stay at least 300 feet away from the substation.
- Electrical equipment contains oil. Be alert for explosions and toxic smoke.

Transformer fires

- Burning transformers call for similar procedures as substation fires.
- Do not open or enter switch cabinets or pad-mounted transformers. This is very dangerous and unnecessary.
- Never cut locks or pry cabinets open. Equipment contains live electrical components and if you contact them, you could be killed. Once a fire has begun, the equipment is unsalvageable and will be replaced. Don't risk your life to save ruined equipment.
- Call South Central Power and evacuate the area. Whether it's a transformer on the ground or on a pole, be alert for explosions and toxic smoke.
- Let transformers burn until otherwise instructed by utility personnel. They will determine when it is safe to extinguish an equipment fire and will advise your incident commander regarding the safest procedures.



Key points

- Call South Central Power. They want to help keep you and the public safe.
- Hands off electrical systems.
- Never attempt to disconnect electrical service.
- Never touch power lines. Utility personnel will switch off the electricity to de-energize a scene and will inform you when the area is safe.
- Assume all power lines are energized, and keep yourself and your vehicle or equipment as far away as possible.
- Even low-voltage electric shock can be fatal. And remember, your gear does NOT insulate you against electric shock.
- When responding to a substation or transformer fire, let it burn, evacuate the area and protect exposures. Your focus should be on safeguarding life and property.

Questions?

Call us at 800-282-5064
www.southcentralpower.com