

# Downed Power Lines

Wires installed on utility poles carry electricity. And when wires are down, they are dangerous—electricity can still flow through them.

**Never assume that a downed power line is not energized, as it still could be “live.”**

**TO REPORT A DOWNED WIRE: Contact your local energy provider.** Their information can be found **here**.

They will ask for the nearest cross street or the number of a nearby pole that has not been damaged and is away from any downed wires. The pole number can be found on the metal tag attached to the pole.

**The bottom line: Never go near or touch an electrical wire. Never go near or touch anything or anyone that has come in contact with an electrical wire.**

☐ Stay at least 300 feet away from all downed wires--and keep others from going near them as well. Call your local energy provider or the police or fire department immediately.

☐ Any wire on the ground or hanging from a pole must be considered live and dangerous. Telephone and cable TV wires may be entangled with electric wires and must also be treated as live and dangerous.

☐ Be especially careful and try to avoid driving or parking a vehicle near downed wires. If downed wires are in the street, near the curb, or on the sidewalk, use extreme caution. Never drive over downed power lines.

☐ In the event that a wire comes down on a vehicle with passengers, stay in the vehicle until professional help arrives to safely remove you from the vehicle.

○ If you **MUST** get out of the vehicle because of fire or other life-threatening hazards, jump clear of the vehicle so that you do not touch any part of the car and the ground at the same time. Jump as far as possible away from the vehicle with both feet landing on the ground at the same time.

○ Once you clear the vehicle, shuffle away, with both feet on the ground, or hop away, with both feet landing on the ground at the same time. Do not run away from the vehicle as the electricity forms rings of different voltages. Running may cause your legs to "bridge" current from a higher ring to a lower voltage ring. This could result in a shock. Get a safe distance away.

☐ Never use water on an electric fire, burning vehicle or wire, or extend a pole or stick that can create a path through which the electricity can travel. Our human instinct is to reach out to help, but touching an individual who has been energized also provides a path through which electricity can travel. Having two people injured instead of one means that nobody can get help. Call 911 for help immediately.

☐ Do not attempt to cut or remove a tree that is, or could become, entangled with power lines. Contact your local energy company for assistance and wait for a professional tree removal crew to do the job. If you think the tree is dangerous, stay in a sheltered area away from the tree.

☐ Do not throw objects up into power lines, as this can cause short circuits that could result in injuries. This includes items you might not consider conductive, such as ropes and strings.

☐ Teach children never to play around electric equipment and never to touch power lines. They could be seriously injured or killed if they touch live electrical equipment.

☐ Look up! Always examine your surroundings for power line locations before doing any outside work.

(Information was gathered from PSE&G's website to provide these safety types  
<http://www.pseg.com/home/index.jsp>)