



## Downed Power Lines Safety

In the aftermath of a major storm or earthquake, be aware of hazards presented by downed power lines. If you see a power line on the ground, don't assume that it is insulated. Stay at least 10 feet away from the wire and secure the area to keep others away, too. If you discover a low or fallen line, do the following:

- Consider all wires ENERGIZED and dangerous. Even lines that are de-energized could become energized at any time. Observe the minimum approach distance of 10 feet. A live wire touching the ground can cause electricity to travel through the ground, radiating outward from the contact point. **STAY CLEAR!**
- DO NOT attempt to remove a tree limb or other object from a power line. Electricity can travel through limbs, especially when they are wet.  
When cleaning up after the storm, make absolutely sure that no power lines are near before cutting or trimming damaged trees and removing debris from your property.
- If a broken power line should fall on your vehicle, stay inside the vehicle. Use your cell phone to call for help. The vehicle can become energized and you are safer remaining inside until help arrives. Things like fences and guardrails can also become energized if a downed power line contacts them. Warn others not to approach or touch the vehicle and have them call for help.
- 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 it 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.
- If someone makes contact with a downed power line, don't try to rescue them because you risk becoming a victim yourself. Call for help (911).

