

## Electric line storm damage safety

OSHA has designated May as Electrical Safety Month for emphasis, and with the increasingly frequent high wind events we have experienced this is a great time to keep some basics in mind to help protect you and your family if you encounter damaged electric lines or items in contact with lines.

Tips for every day -

- Clearing out your home's gutters is a good idea, just remember when doing so to make sure you and your ladder keep at least 10 ft distance away from any overhead utility lines.
- Notify your utility company if you see trees or limbs in contact with overhead lines so they can check them and remove those that could cause damage during wind events.

After a storm -

- Anytime trees or limbs are down or damaged, there is potential for utility lines to be involved, and they may be concealed in or under the debris.
- Always assume that downed lines are energized – avoid approaching them or anything near them. The ground or objects can be energized up to 35 feet away, even more in wet conditions. Items like metal storage buildings and fences can be energized, so avoid them.
- Never drive over a power line or through water that is in contact with them.
- Never try to move a downed line. Even using items that are typically not conductive will not prevent injury or death.
- Always call the involved utility company or 911 if you aren't sure what utility is involved or if there is a person endangered.

If a vehicle contacts a power line or utility pole –

- Stay away and call 911. Tell others not to approach the vehicle, downed lines or anything in contact with the lines.
- Tell the occupants to stay in place inside the vehicle until utility company or emergency responders arrive unless you see fire or smoke.

If you see smoke or fire from the vehicle –

- Jump from the vehicle with your feet together. DO NOT touch the ground and vehicle at the same time.
- "Bunny hop" away with feet together or shuffle your feet – avoiding lifting your feet – until you are at least 50 feet from the vehicle and downed lines.

More information is available at [www.esfi.org](http://www.esfi.org) and specific information for homeowners is at <https://www.esfi.org/electrical-safety-outside-the-home-overhead-power-lines/>