Stay Away from Fallen Power Lines

WHAT’S AT STAKE

Fallen power lines are not preventable during winter storms, but you should avoid them for your own safety. High winds, heavy ice or snow, falling trees, floods, avalanches and mudslides can knock down electrical lines.

WHAT’S THE DANGER

You must never touch a fallen line or anything that may be in contact with it. These lines carry enough electricity to kill you instantly. People who survive contact with power lines have to live with painful burns, amputations, brain damage and other traumatic injuries.

EXAMPLE

When a certain winter storm hit Kansas ? resulting in ice weighing down power lines ? in one county fallen power lines caused seven house fires. Power lines also fell onto highways throughout the state, increasing the danger for drivers.

HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF

Report downed lines immediately to the utility company or the emergency agency in your area such as 9-1-1 or the police. If a power line falls across an automobile you are in, stay in the vehicle. The rubber tires provide insulation preventing the electricity from traveling through the
vehicle to the ground.

If you must get out because of fire or another immediate threat, jump clear so that no part of your body is touching the car when your feet touch the ground. Keep your feet together. Shuffle or

hop until you are well away from the power line. Warn others away from the danger of a fallen power line.

Here are more reminders about safety around power lines:

- When you must work around power lines, carefully observe all company precautions including having the power shut down before the job starts. Never attempt to raise or move live lines.
- Cutting trees, putting up signs, painting buildings and cleaning eavestroughs are some situations which could put you dangerously close to a power line. Keep a clearance of at least 10 feet (three meters) between the line and your body or any equipment.
- Never use a metal or metal reinforced ladder anywhere near an electrical line or installation. The same applies to a wet ladder.
- Keep difficult-to-maneuver objects well away from power lines. An extended ladder can topple into a power line.
- Carry long objects such as lumber or window washing extension poles parallel to the ground rather than upright.

FINAL WORD

Contact with a live power line can cause instant death or disabling injuries. Work safely around power lines, and never touch a downed line.