

Contact with power lines, both overhead and below ground, can have devastating impacts. Knowing how to prevent contact with a power line and what you should do if you contact a power line could be the difference between life and death.

People who work close to power lines – such as farmers, construction workers and utility workers – are at higher risk of making contact with a power line, but contacts can happen just as easily at home.

Power line safety basics

The below tips will help keep you safe around overhead and underground power lines:

- ▶ **Locate overhead power lines.** Before starting any outdoor work, look up to locate overhead power lines.
- ▶ **Locate underground power lines.** Some power lines are buried underground. If you plan to disturb the ground – such as building a deck or fence, or planting a tree or garden – call Alberta One Call at 1-800-242-3447 or visit albertaonecall.com at least three business days in advance of your work to submit a request to locate underground utility lines.
- ▶ **Stay back at least three metres (10 feet) from power lines.** This includes keeping any tools you are using, such as ladders or pruners, at least three metres from power lines and not attaching, draping or bracing anything on a power line, regardless of what it is made of. You don't have to touch a power line to be injured or killed; electricity can jump or "arc" to you or your tools if you get too close to power lines.
- ▶ **Carry ladders, pruners and other long equipment horizontally.** Carrying these items parallel to level ground instead of upright helps you avoid contact with overhead power lines.
- ▶ **Stay away from dangerous areas.** Stay away from electrical transmission and distribution lines and never climb utility poles. If an object ends up inside a transformer station, do not try to retrieve it yourself. Instead, call the local power distribution company.
- ▶ **Plant trees at least eight metres (26 feet) away from overhead power lines.** Before planting a tree, call Alberta One Call at 1-800-242-3447 or visit albertaonecall.com at least three business days in advance of your work to submit a request to locate underground utility lines. If existing trees have grown into or close to power lines, contact a utility arborist or your local electric utility to have the tree safely trimmed.
- ▶ **Stay back at least 10 metres (33 feet) and call 9-1-1 if you see a downed power line.**

- ▶ **Don't park your vehicle under a power line during a lightning storm.**
- ▶ **Talk to your kids about power line safety.** Remind your children not to climb power poles or trees near power lines, and not to play near green boxes in parks or on lawns. Remind your children of power line safety particularly when flying kites.

Additional safety tips for workers and farmers

Most power line incidents happen on farms or ranches, and dump trucks are the cause of more than half of the accidents caused by power line contacts. Follow the below safety tips – in addition to the power line safety basics on page one – to avoid contact with power lines:

- ▶ Know the height of your equipment, lower grain augers, and make sure people and equipment stay at least three metres away (seven metres is ideal) to prevent an incident. High-reach vehicles, such as combines, aerial lifts and dump trucks, must have a signaller to ensure equipment doesn't come within three metres of overhead power lines, as per the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*.
- ▶ Stack and store safely. Pile haystacks, graineries and fuel tanks away from power lines.
- ▶ Ensure that dump trucks on site lower their box after dumping the load. It's good practice to have a raised box indicator installed in the truck to remind the driver when the box is raised.
- ▶ Stay alert. Many incidents happen at the end of the day when workers are tired or are rushing to finish a job.

What do to in power line incidents

If your vehicle or equipment has made contact with a power line, electrical pole or transformer (green box), do the following:

- ▶ Keep your vehicle/equipment where it is. Only move it if it is still running and you are able to free it from the power line and at least 10 metres (33 feet) away before parking and turning off the vehicle/equipment.
- ▶ Stay inside your vehicle/equipment.
 - ▶ Call 9-1-1 and, if possible, the local utility company.
 - ▶ Tell everyone around you to stay at least 10 metres (33 feet) back, including first responders.

- ▶ Only exit your vehicle/equipment if you must get out to stay safe, such as if there is a fire.
 - ▶ No part of your body or clothing should touch the vehicle/equipment and the ground at the same time. Remove any loose-fitting clothing and leave your belongings behind.
 - ▶ Open the door and carefully step onto the metal frame of your vehicle/equipment. Prepare to jump by tucking your elbows into your stomach and keep your hands clasped close to your chest.
 - ▶ Jump away from your vehicle/equipment with you feet together, and land with your feet together.
- ▶ Jump or shuffle your feet at least 10 metres (33 feet) away from the vehicle/equipment.
 - ▶ If jumping, ensure both feet leave the ground and land on the ground at the same time.
 - ▶ If shuffling, ensure your feet do not lift off the ground and are always touching each other. The inside of your heel should still be touching the toe of the other foot when you start to move the other leg forward.

If you see a vehicle or equipment make contact with a power line, electrical pole or transformer (green box), do the following:

- ▶ Stay back at least 10 metres (33 feet), and tell everyone around you to stay back.
- ▶ If you can communicate with people in the vehicle/equipment, tell them to stay inside the vehicle/equipment.
- ▶ Call 9-1-1 and, if possible, the local utility company.
- ▶ Talk to the occupant(s) and wait for help to arrive.

If you receive an electrical shock, it may be difficult to do anything. If you can, try to do the following:

- ▶ Let go of the electrical source, if applicable.
- ▶ Call 9-1-1 or yell for someone else to call 9-1-1.
- ▶ Don't move, unless you need to move away from the electric source.



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If someone else receives an electrical shock, do the following:

- ▶ Do not touch them and stay at least 10 metres (33 feet) away. If they are still in contact with electricity, they could shock you too.
- ▶ Call 9-1-1. If multiple people are around, have someone call 9-1-1 while someone stays with the victim. If you are the only person around, your priority is to call 9-1-1. If you must leave the scene to do so, return to the victim as soon as possible, but make sure to stay at least 10 metres away.

*Information contained in this tip sheet has been modified from **Fortis Alberta**, the **Electrical Safety Authority**, **Alberta One Call** and **wherestheline.ca**.*

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