Public Safety

Stay Away, Stay Safe

Keep your distance from all fallen wires

Any downed or fallen wire should be treated as live and dangerous, and you should stay away. Fallen power lines are dangerous because they carry an electric current that can cause serious or even fatal injuries. If you encounter a fallen wire, keep yourself and others away, and call 911 and your local power company immediately.

DISTANCE IS YOUR FRIEND — Under normal conditions, power lines are not supposed to lie on the ground. However, there are circumstances, such as high winds and storms, that can bring down power lines and other utility wires. Downed power lines can be dangerous because they carry an electric current that can instantly injure or cause death.

There is no way for you to determine whether fallen power lines are energized or not because you can't smell, see or hear electricity. Always keep your distance and presume a fallen wire is energized and dangerous.

Also, do not touch anything or anyone the line may be touching. Objects can become energized just by contacting a downed power line. Do not touch any wires because even telephone or cable lines can become energized.

DON'T GUESS, STAY AWAY — Never touch a fallen wire, no matter how harmless it may look. Power lines are not insulated or coated like power cords for home appliances.

In some instances, power lines may have a coating of weatherproofing material that may appear to be some form of insulation. It is not an insulating material and does not make the line safe to touch.

It is sometimes difficult even for professionals to tell the difference between energized power lines and other utility lines. Don't guess and stay away from all wires.

KEEP CARS CLEAR TOO — If your vehicle comes in contact with a downed power line, stay put. If you can, honk and lower your windows to alert passers-by. Caution them to stay away from the vehicle and ask them to call the power company and emergency officials.

If you must exit the vehicle, remove all loose items or clothing and jump clear of the vehicle. Avoid touching the car and the ground at the same time. Land with both feet together; keep your feet as close together as possible; and shuffle away from the car.

SAFETY DVD AVAILABLE

Visit **http://www.indianamichiganpower.com/safety/power-lines** to view or order a video clip on the dangers of contacting energized power lines.

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