



NFPA 70E

## eSafetyLine

### **Emergency Procedures for Downed Lines**

NFPA 70E Standard for Electrical Safety in the Workplace does not actually apply to installations under the control of electric utilities. So, it may seem that the following would not fit our theme this month for NFPA 70E safety, but the Annex N of this standard does address recommendations for dealing with downed power lines. And, regardless of the purpose of the standard, these actions still provide help in protecting workers as well as the public from the danger associated with electricity.

Preparation is the first step. Make sure you know emergency numbers and a contact number for the local utility. Know who on the site has CPR/First Aid training and can assist in an emergency. All jobsites require trained personnel when medical services are not within a reasonable distance. NFPA 70E requires all employees working on or near energized circuits or parts to be trained in first aid and CPR.

If you come upon a fallen wire, maintain a clearance distance of at least 10 feet. Contact emergency services and the utility to disconnect power. Be careful of wet ground and other conductive materials. Water in the soil or pools of water can be conductive and will expand the area energized by the fallen wire. A fence post or guardrail in contact with the energized wire will also carry current. The energized area will then include the Earth's surface around the fence or guardrail.

Use flagging to keep motorists, pedestrians and others away from the energized area. If possible, set up barricades. Do not attempt to touch the wire or anything in contact with the wire.

If the wire has fallen on a vehicle or equipment, it may be arcing, so smoking and fire may occur. Remain in the vehicle or instruct others to do so. Wait for the

local utility to cut power before trying to ext. If you must exit the vehicle, it should be done by leaping with both feet at one time. Jumpers should try to maintain their balance and get as far away as possible without touching the vehicle. Upon landing do not run or walk away. Shuffle or bunny hop. The ground will be energized at different levels moving away from the source (i.e. downed line). Minimizing the gap between points of contact with the ground can help prevent electricity from traveling through you from one energy level to another. And, remember jumping is a last resort.

If you are operating a vehicle or equipment and contact is made, stop the equipment. If it is safe to jump, do so using the precautions noted above. Do not return or allow others to return to the vehicle or equipment.

Once power has been cut, emergency responders can approach victims and render first aid as needed.

### **Discussion Questions**

Why should you avoid fences or guardrails?

**Answer:** They can conduct electricity and may be energized a distance away from the downed line.

# MEETING / TRAINING ATTENDANCE ROSTER

COMPANY: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ SAFETY MEETING

JOB/DEPT: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ SAFETY TRAINING

DATE: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

TIME: \_\_\_\_\_

TOPICS ADDRESSED: \_\_\_\_\_

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## EMPLOYEE'S SIGNATURES

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EMPLOYEE SUGGESTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS: \_\_\_\_\_

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ACTION TAKEN: \_\_\_\_\_

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Supervisor's Signature

\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Safety Coordinator's Signature

\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_  
Date