

Powerline Safety

Fire activity near high voltage electrical transmission/distribution lines can cause multiple hazards and electrocute or seriously injure firefighters. The IC and line supervisors must be aware and communicate powerline hazards to all resources. Contact power companies when powerlines are threatened or involved.

Down Powerlines

- Communicate: Notify all responders of down electrical lines. Obtain radio check-back.
- Identify: Determine *entire* extent of hazard by visually tracking all lines, two poles in each direction, from the downed wire.
- Isolate: Flag area around down wire hazards, post guards.
- Deny entry: Delay firefighting actions until hazard identification and flagging are complete, and/or confine actions to safe areas.
- Downed line on vehicle: Stay in vehicle until the power company arrives. If vehicle is on fire, jump out with both feet together. Do not touch the vehicle. Keep feet together and shuffle or hop away.
- **Always treat downed wires as energized!**

Ground Tactics

- Normal tactics apply when fire is more than 100 feet from powerlines.
- Heavy smoke and flames can cause arcs to ground. Direct attack must be abandoned within 100 feet of transmission lines.
- Spot fires or low ground fires can be fought with hose lines if heavy smoke or flame is not within 100 feet of powerlines.
- Always maintain a distance of 35 feet from transmission towers.
- Never use straight streams or foam—use a fog pattern.
- Use extreme caution if engaging in tactical firing operations.
- Extinguish wooden poles burning at the base to prevent down powerline hazards.

Aerial Tactics

- Communicate locations of all transmission lines to air resources.
- Aerial drops onto powerlines will cause arcing to ground or arcing to powerline towers and poles.
- Drops should be parallel to lines and avoid drift making contact on the powerlines.
- When flying across powerlines, cross at the towers.

ALWAYS!

- **Look Out** for any powerlines near the incident.
- **Communicate** location of all powerlines that present a hazard.
- **Escape Routes** should not be under or near overhead powerlines.
- **Safety Zones, ICP, and staging areas** should not be located under or near overhead powerlines.