

General Information

- Electricity systems carry voltages up to 400,000 volts, and can be supported by wooden poles or steel towers.
- Even 230 volts (domestic voltage) can be lethal.
- Never assume that electrical equipment is dead, even if the wires have fallen or broken.
- Remember that the power can be switched back on at any time, without warning.
- Touching electricity wires or objects / persons / vehicles in contact with the wires can be fatal.
- Electricity can jump gaps.
- Trees, string, ropes, highway crash barriers and water can conduct electricity.
- Once an electricity wire is on the ground, you do not have to touch it to be killed. The current will travel a reasonable distance through the ground.
- Rubber boots will not protect you.
- Look out and look up for overhead wires before you start. Most wires are not insulated.
- Always carry long objects horizontally.
- SSEPD emergency telephone numbers should already be known by your control centre. Call SSEPD urgently with a precise location of the incident.
- Do not start fighting a fire in a substation before SSEPD has confirmed it is safe for you to do so.
- Do not approach a crashed vehicle if it is in contact with electricity wires until SSEPD has confirmed it is safe for you to do so.

If in doubt keep five metres away and seek advice from SSE Power Distribution (SSEPD).

Key Message

- Don't be tempted to start a rescue before safety has been confirmed.
- Make sure SSEPD has been called as soon as you know the incident involves electricity poles, wires or substations.
- The wire may become live without notice. This may be after a few seconds or could be any time up to over an hour later if SSEPD is not aware of the incident.
- Always assume the wires are live.

Emergency Contact

In an emergency, call the appropriate number below:

North of Scotland 0800 300 999

Central Southern England 08000 72 72 82

SSE Power Distribution Ltd
Inveralmond House
200 Dunkeld Road
Perth PH1 3AQ

Web: www.ssepd.co.uk
Registered in Scotland 213459

Stock Code 007641

SAFETY ADVICE FOR THE FIRE SERVICE

Electricity can kill
Keep at least five metres away



 **Scottish and Southern
Energy**
Power Distribution

Introduction

In every emergency situation that you attend, you need to be aware that electricity wires or substations may be involved, or be in close proximity. Even low (domestic) voltage can be fatal, and electricity can jump large gaps. So it is vital that you work safely in the vicinity of electricity wires and substations.

This leaflet provides a basic guide to keeping safe from electricity when you attend incidents. The information should be used in conjunction with your in-house procedures.

Examples of emergency situations associated with electricity networks include:

- Vehicle tipping or loading under an overhead line.
- Operating construction and agricultural vehicles or cranes under overhead lines.
- Contact with overhead lines whilst fishing, camping or scaffolding.
- Road traffic accidents involving collision with electricity poles.
- Attempted suicides at substations, poles or steel towers.
- Damage to, or contact with, underground cables whilst excavating.

Could this happen to you?

You are called to a fire at an electricity substation. The fire has taken hold and is burning fiercely when you arrive. You assume that the electricity must have been turned off. You cut the lock off the main gate and run out your hoses. You start fighting the fire, and then notice your mate on the hose is lying on the ground shaking violently. Are you sure the electricity is dead?

You attend an RTA in a country area. A car has collided with a wooden pole on the verge. The pole has snapped and there are wires lying on the car. There are two people trapped in

the car, one is screaming for help. The ambulance has not yet arrived. A colleague attempts to open the car door, but he is thrown to the ground and the wires spark. What if he has been electrocuted? Are you sure the electricity is switched off?

Rescue Flow Chart

Before attempting to rescue a person injured by, or in the vicinity of electricity, follow this risk assessment chart.

