

Power Line Safety after the Storm

With the outbreak of tornados that we had last month Butler REC would like to remind everybody of the potential hazards that storms can cause. Storms can happen any time of the year. We want everyone to be aware and cautious of potential hazards that could be encountered during storm clean up and recovery:

- When you see power lines on the ground following a storm, stay away, warn others to stay away, and contact the electric utility. Lines do not have to be arcing or sparking to be live. Any utility wire, including telephone or cable lines sagging or down, could be in contact with an energized power line making them also very dangerous, so stay away from all of them. Never drive over a downed line; it could cause poles or other equipment to come crashing down.

- Be alert to the possibility that tree limbs or debris may hide an electrical hazard. Keep in mind a downed power line that is energized can cause other things around it to become potentially hazardous, traveling through the ground to other metal objects like chain link fences or metal culverts.

- Keep in mind that a line that is indeed “dead” could become energized during power restoration efforts or improper use of generators.

- If you are in a car which has come in contact with a downed power line, stay in your vehicle and wait until the utility has arrived and de-energized the line. Warn others not to approach the car. If you must leave your car—only in the case of fire—jump free without touching the ground and auto at the same time, keeping both feet together. Then continue to keep both feet together and hop to safety.



- A live wire touching the ground causes electricity to fan out in a pool and the action of walking or running allows one foot to move from one voltage zone to another. Your body then becomes the path for the electricity and electrocution is the tragic result.

- If you use a portable generator, be sure a transfer safety switch has been installed or connect the appliance(s) directly to the generator. This prevents electricity from traveling back through the power lines, what is known as “back feed.” Back feed creates danger for

anyone near lines, particularly crews working to restore power.

If you see a potential threat such as sagging lines or trees in lines please contact our office at 800-464-0060 or for more information about safety around power lines visit SafeElectricity.org .

