

Hazard Alert: Downed Power Lines

BC Hydro urges public safety, avoidance

Location: Anywhere energized power lines may be downed, in contact with objects / ground

Date: July 13, 2017

Details of Close Call / Serious Incident: In the past few months BC Hydro workers have come across several situations where caution tape had been applied either directly to downed power lines or to poles or trees that were in contact with power lines.

They also discovered numerous instances where members of the public, in an effort to clear debris from a road, had cut trees that were in contact with power lines. In at least one of those instances the person suffered an electrical contact and was rushed to hospital.

It is important to remember that power lines often remain energized while on or near the ground and that anything touching a power line can provide a path for electricity. First responders and members of the public should maintain a distance of 10 metres from any downed line and anything that is in contact with a power line.

Forestry and Tree Trimming Incidents – April to May 2017

- 1) A logging truck snagged a telephone line that was crossing the street and broke the pole. The BC Hydro 25kV line dropped from the top of the pole onto the truck. The line remained energized as the load and tires on the truck caught fire (see photo at right). Passers-by attempted to extinguish the fire using portable extinguishers, unaware that the 25kV line was energized on top of the truck.



- 2) A work crew was using an excavator to remove a large tree near a power line when they lost control of the tree causing it to fall through the line. The work crew continued to clean up the tree before BC Hydro crews arrived on scene.
- 3) A member of the public felled a tree onto a 25kV line and then tried to cut the tree. He received an electrical contact and was transported to medical aid.
- 4) A self-loading logging truck was cleaning up a load of logs from the side of the road when the picker contacted the telephone line. The movement shook the BC Hydro 25kV line off of the cross-arm and the line sagged and touched a tree.

Key Messages from BC Hydro:

- Never approach a power line. Always assume that it is energized. Never touch anything that is in contact with a power line and always assume that it is energized too.
- Look up and identify overhead hazards. Know your distances and plan your work to allow for inadvertent movement.
- Follow safe excavation practices. “Call before you dig” by contacting BC One Call at 1-800-474-6886.

Looking for Training? BC Hydro provides electrical safety awareness training for trades workers, first responders, and members of the public who may have interaction with their facilities.

The training is provided free of charge, and it is available both online and in person. Visit www.bchydro.com/safetytraining

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BC Forest Safety