

Downed Power Line

Detroit Edison (DTE) power lines and equipment are built to meet rigid state and national safety standards and are safe under normal conditions. But when high winds, heavy icing conditions or severe storms hit, power lines can come down.

Never touch a downed power line, or anything it is in contact with - even if there are no sparks. A live wire may whip or sweep through a wide area looking for a ground. A ground is the earth or something touching the earth, like a fence, puddle, or even a tree. A live wire that has already found a ground may lie silent but be equally deadly.

Be especially cautious near metal fences after severe weather. Electric current will be strongest where a downed line has touched the fence, but even a connecting fence several backyards away can be energized and just as dangerous.

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Source

U-M Plant Operations

DTE Energy

More Information

<http://www.dteenergy.com/residentialCustomers/problemsSafety/safety/electric/electricSafety.htm>
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<http://www.plantops.umich.edu/>

Prevention / Mitigation / Preparedness – Downed Power Line

Keep at least 20 feet away from pole-to-pole power lines at all times. Power lines are not insulated in the same way as your household wiring. That's why they're mounted well out of harm's reach or buried in the ground, as the National Electrical Safety Code requires.

Be aware of surroundings after heavy winds, rain, or ice storms. Do not assume that the area is safe because:

- The downed wire is on the ground and not sparking
- The wiring is coated, weatherproofed or insulated and therefore is just telephone wiring

Do not drive over downed wiring

Response – Downed Power Line

Never touch anything or anyone that is in contact with a downed wire. Call 911 so DPSS can secure the area. Stay on scene until the arrival of the DPS officer. DPSS dispatch will contact DTE immediately at (800)477-4747.

If a downed wire is on a vehicle, stay in the vehicle and wait for help. If you must get out because of fire or other danger, jump clear of the vehicle without touching it and the ground at the same time. Then hop with feet together or shuffle away -- don't run or stride. Electricity spreads out through the ground in ripples, like a stone dropped in water. The voltage is highest in the ring closest to the vehicle and decreases with distance. Hop with feet together or shuffle away so that one foot won't be in a higher voltage zone than another, which could make you a conductor for electricity!

If someone is suffering an electrical shock, act quickly, but keep yourself out of danger. Never touch a person who is being shocked. If you can do it safely, unplug the appliance or turn off the power. Call 911 for medical help immediately and begin CPR after the victim is cleared from contact.

Recovery – Downed Power Line

If there was a loss of power, contact Plant Operations (647-2059) immediately for assistance with building systems.

Debrief with all parties involved in the response and recovery efforts to discuss strengths and weaknesses and what could have been done better.

Contact the Risk Management department (734)764-2200 so claims management and other insurance matters can be handled.