

A Safety Note from Your Cooperative



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A WINTRY MIX

As I write this article this month, I hear the local news reporting the 70 car pile-up in Iowa this week. How sad for those people involved and for their families. Winter often takes a heavy toll.

Although you might not have been in something so terrible, we do still encounter slippery roads. So, what does this article have to do with electrical safety? A lot! For you see, when a driver loses control of their vehicle due to slippery roads, they often end up entering the ditch and then hitting a power pole. When that happens, the pole could be damaged to the point those energized lines end up on the ground and/or your vehicle. What you do next could be the difference between life and death.

Here are the actions to take if you slide off the road this winter and hit a power pole.

THE MOST IMPORTANT ONE - Downed power lines can be deadly. ALWAYS assume a downed power line is live and avoid going near it or anything in contact with it.

Know What to Do

- If your car comes in contact with a downed power line while you are inside, stay in the car.
- Do not touch any part of the car's frame or any other metal.
- Use a cell phone or honk your horn to summon help.
- Allow only rescue personnel to approach the car.
- If your car is in contact with a downed power line and you must exit due to fire or another imminent threat:
 - Do not touch your vehicle and the ground at the same time with any part of your body or clothing.
 - Open the door to your vehicle without touching the metal door frame.
 - Jump out of the vehicle with both feet together and so both feet land at the same time.
 - Shuffle away so that the toe of one foot shuffles forward along the length of the other foot, ensuring that both feet are in constant contact and always touching the ground.



Precautions

- Downed power lines can energize the ground up to 35 feet away.
- If you see a downed power line, immediately notify local authorities.
- Never drive over downed power lines or through water that is in contact with them.
- Never try to move a downed power line. Even using items that typically are not conductive will not prevent injury or death.
- If someone comes in contact with a downed power line or something else that has become electrified, call 911 immediately. Do not touch them; they could be energized and pose a danger to anyone who comes in contact with them.