



# How to Be [SAFE] Around Power Lines



# Knowledge about electricity could **SAVE YOUR LIFE.**

Idaho Power keeps power lines high in the air or buried in the ground for your safety.

**Always assume power lines are energized and dangerous.**

Electricity always tries to go to the ground. It is silent and can be fatal. It may be conducted through metal, water, trees, and people. Electricity can take more than one path to the ground — it takes all paths to the ground.

Follow the safety precautions in this brochure to help prevent serious or fatal injuries from electrical accidents, especially if you work near power lines.

For questions or safety assistance around power lines, call **208-388-2323** or **1-800-488-6151** outside the Treasure Valley.

# Keep a Safe Distance: The **10-FOOT** Rule

You should always **stay at least 10 feet away** from overhead power lines of 50,000 volts (50 kilovolts [kV]) or less. Contractors, workers, and their tools are required to keep this distance while working, per Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) regulations and Idaho's Overhead Line Safety Act require.

If you don't stay the required distance, you are placing yourself and others in danger, breaking the law, and could be fined.

**If the voltage of the line you are working near is higher than 50 kV, keep the following wider distances.**

50 kV	to	200 kV	15 feet
200 kV	to	350 kV	20 feet
350 kV	to	500 kV	25 feet
500 kV	to	750 kV	35 feet
750 kV	to	1,000 kV	45 feet

Higher voltages can be difficult to recognize. If you are unsure of a line's voltage, take these extra precautions:

- If on a job, check with your boss or the job superintendent. They should know the voltages of lines near heavy equipment or other employee work areas.
- Contact Idaho Power at 208-388-2323. An Idaho Power representative can determine the voltage of the lines in your area.



# Safe

## WORK PRACTICES

Stay alert and follow these guidelines,  
**especially if doing farm or ranch work.**

- Before starting work, always look up for electrical lines that may interfere with your work.
- Keep farm machinery away from power lines, poles, and guy wires (the support cables for power poles).
- Check again for overhead power lines before lifting or moving tall objects, such as irrigation pipes, or clearing debris from pipes. Always carry pipes or tall objects horizontally.
- Carefully watch what you are doing and have a spotter on hand to ensure equipment does not come close to overhead lines.

### **Do not take risks.**

- Never stack or store materials, such as hay bales, under overhead power lines.
- Do not spray water on power lines or equipment.
- Do not attach signs or equipment to power poles.
- If practicing prescribed burning of ditches or pastures, do not burn near power poles or other electrical equipment.
- If you strike a wire or pole, contact us, as it may have weakened the structure or created slack in the line. Call 208-388-2323 or 1-800-488-6151 outside the Treasure Valley.



# DOWNED

## Power Lines

Severe weather, such as high winds and heavy snow, can cause power lines to fall. So can a car accident involving a power pole.

### If you encounter a downed power line:

- Assume the line is energized and dangerous.
- Stay as far away as possible but at least 100 feet, and keep others away.
- Contact Idaho Power immediately at 208-388-2323 or 1-800-488-6151 outside the Treasure Valley, or call 911.
- Never touch a downed line or use any object to move a downed power line.
- Never move tree limbs or other objects near or touching a downed line.
- If someone touches a downed power line, do not touch or try to rescue them. You risk becoming a victim yourself. Call 911.

### If a downed line falls on your vehicle:

Stay inside (if safe to do so) until help arrives. If you must leave the vehicle because of a fire or other life-threatening situation, jump out and as far away as possible with both feet landing on the ground at the same time. Keeping your feet together, shuffle as far from the scene as possible — at least 100 feet. DO NOT touch the vehicle and the ground at the same time.



# UNDERGROUND Power Lines

Some electrical lines, along with other utility lines (like gas pipelines) are buried underground. Digging into underground power lines can be just as dangerous as contacting an overhead line. The best thing to do is make sure there is no danger in advance.

**Before digging**, you are legally required to locate underground public utilities, such as buried power lines. You can do so by calling **811** — a free service — at least two days in advance.

# TREES Near Lines

If you notice a tree interfering with power lines, **do not trim the tree yourself**.

Call Idaho Power at 208-388-2323 or 1-800-488-6151 outside the Treasure Valley. Idaho Power hires qualified line-clearing contractors to safely prune trees near lines.

Our crews regularly clear the trees along power lines to help improve safety and keep the grid reliable.

No job — no deadline —  
is more important than  
**SAFETY.**

