

# Don't Become Electricity's PATH TO GROUND



When electric utility equipment becomes damaged, **the ground and objects can become energized.**

If you are in a situation where there could be downed power lines or a damaged pole, guy wire or padmount transformer (green box), **know what to do to save your life and the lives of others:**

## CAR ACCIDENT

**Stay inside your vehicle** or cab since the ground or objects could be energized.



**Call 9-1-1** and report that there are downed or damaged power lines or a dislodged green box.

**Wait for the utility crew** to arrive to deenergize the power.

**Do not exit** until someone from the utility says it is safe to do so.

## ONLY EXIT IF THE VEHICLE IS ON FIRE

Cross your arms over your chest and **make a clean jump out.**

**Do not** touch the vehicle and the ground at the same time.

Make solid hops with your **feet together** as far away as you can.

**Do not** return to the vehicle.



## IF YOU ARE A BYSTANDER

**Do not approach** the scene to try and help.

**Stay at least 50 feet** away and do not lean on or touch anything, including fences or guardrails.



## What would you do if you encountered a downed power line?

While typically not an everyday occurrence, overhead power lines, padmount transformers (green boxes) or other electrical equipment can become damaged due to storms, fires, car accidents, animal interference or from a car slipping off the road, for example.

(Spoiler alert. Do not do any of these things.) If you were in an accident involving a downed overhead power line, would you get out of the car and run? If you saw a car accident involving a downed line or damaged green box, would you run to the scene to help? If you saw a downed line across a road, would you approach it or try to move it?

**Any of these actions can cause serious injury or electrocution (death).** Downed lines and other damaged equipment can energize the ground, nearby people and objects. Never go near a downed power line or try to move it with an object. Electricity can jump from a wire or object to you to find the quickest path to ground.

The safest place to be after an accident involving a downed power line is inside your vehicle or cab. Unless your vehicle is on fire or giving off smoke, here is what you should do:

1. Stay inside your vehicle or cab.
2. Call 9-1-1 and report that there are downed or damaged power lines.
3. Try to remain calm.
4. Wait for the utility crew to arrive to deenergize the power.
5. Do not get out until someone from the utility says it is safe to do so.

If you must get out of the vehicle because it is on fire, cross your arms over your chest and make a clean, solid jump out, then intentionally hop with your feet together as far away as you can. If you are unable to make solid hops, shuffle with your feet close together.

When you exit, do not touch the vehicle and the ground at the same time. You could become electricity's path to ground from touch potential (touching something energized and the ground at the same time).

Hopping helps avoid step potential (placing each foot at a different voltage). When electricity escapes into the ground, it is likened to ripples in a pond, with each ripple representing a different voltage.

To learn more about electrical safety, visit [SafeElectricity.org](http://SafeElectricity.org).

Learn more at:

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