

3 Keys of Electrical Safety

#1 – Look Up & Down

- Plan your work to prevent electrical contact – and call for assistance
- Identify overhead and underground power lines

#2 – Keep Back – Know Your Limits

- On foot, stay at least 10 metres (33 feet) away from equipment operating around power lines.
- Use a spotter to make sure you keep equipment back at least 6 metres (20 feet) from power lines

#3 – Stay Back & Call for Help

- Stay back 10 metres (33 feet) from a fallen power line, exposed underground power line or any object in contact with a line.
- If your equipment contacts a line, stay put until help arrives.
- If it's a life threatening situation, jump clear of your vehicle, feet together, and shuffle away keeping both feet close together. Never contact the ground and your vehicle at the same time.
- Call for Help. Do not attempt a rescue until directed by BC Hydro personnel.

How Electricity Behaves

Ripple Effect

If anything makes contact with a high voltage power line, such as a tree or an uninsulated boom on a truck, or if a broken power line falls to the ground or lands on a vehicle, electricity will flow to the ground and spread out in concentric circles like the ripples in a pool of water.

Voltage is very high at the point where electricity makes contact with the ground. The level of intensity decreases as the distance increases from the point of contact. Zero voltage is approximately 10 metres (33 feet) from the point of contact.

Step Potential

Due to the difference in voltage as one moves towards or away from the source of electricity, it is possible to “step” between high and low voltage differences.

As the human body is usually a better conductor of electricity than the ground, the electricity can flow between the feet through the body with sometimes devastating results. This is referred to as “step potential.”

Touch potential

Trees can be very conductive. If a tree comes into contact with a high voltage power line and a person is touching the tree or touching a ladder leaning against the tree, there will be a high to low voltage difference between the person and the ground.

This will force electrical current to flow through them to the ground and may easily result in serious injury or worse. This is referred to as “touch potential.”

What to Do in Case of Electrical Contact

Is there an immediate threat to life or a fire?

- If YES, call 911. They will contact BC Hydro to shut off the power.
- If NO, call 1 888 POWERON (769 3766 or *49376) to have BC Hydro shut off the power.

Shuffle or Hop – Don't Step

- If the ground becomes energized while you work, avoid shock by keeping your feet close together and shuffle away – never allowing the heel of one foot to move beyond the toe of the other.
- If you cannot shuffle approximately 10 metres (33 feet) away from the energized area, put your feet together and hop, but never walk.

Limits of Approach

Planning to work near energized high-voltage equipment and conductors?

Where work is to be conducted in the vicinity of energized high-voltage electrical conductors, WorkSafe BC regulations specify the safe limits of approach that must be maintained by any worker, work, tool, machine, equipment or material.

VOLTAGE	MINIMUM DISTANCE
Phase to Phase	Metres
Over 750 V to 75 kV	3
Over 75 kV to 250 kV	4.5
Over 250 kV to 550 kV	6

Plan Before You Start

You must notify BC Hydro if your work or equipment, or any inadvertent movement of persons or equipment located outside the limits of approach, could possibly result in encroachment of the limits of approach. BC Hydro will work with you to determine what steps are required to protect you, your workers and the BC Hydro distribution system. If necessary, we will also help you complete WorkSafe BC's 30M33 form.

For more information, contact BC Hydro's Electric Service Coordination Centre at 1 877 520 1355.

WorkSafeBC 30M33 Form: Assurance in Writing

Form 30M33 is provided to and used by all power system owners in B.C. It is currently the only assurance in writing form that is acceptable to WorkSafeBC.

This form must be completed prior to commencement of work near energized overhead powerlines.