



News Release

For Immediate Release

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Know how to survive if power lines come down on a car

West Point, NE...When power lines fell upon the car of 16 year-old Jessi Creasey and her sister, they knew how to stay safe. "They did exactly what they were supposed to do and that was stay in the car until help arrived," said their mother.

The harrowing mishap in August 2010 occurred on a Bloomington, IL, city street, where the teens were following a truck with an oversized load. A support vehicle accompanying the truck apparently snagged the overhead electric wires, which fell onto the car carrying the Creasey sisters. The girls waited inside until utility linemen de-energized the wires, before getting out of the car.

Safe Electricity praises the patience of the teens. "Our instincts in such a situation may tell us to get away if we can, but in most cases, getting out of the auto when power lines are down can be deadly," says Molly Hall, Program Executive Director. "Staying in the vehicle is safest, until utility crews ensure the power is cut off."

Safe Electricity has featured the story of two Indiana teens who were involved in a similar accident as part of the national "Teach Learn Care TLC" series. The story of Indiana teens Lee Whitaker and Ashley Taylor, who learned what to do just days before their accident, can be seen at www.SafeElectricity.org. Their story of survival illustrates how important it is for drivers to be aware of the dangers and how to stay safe in such an accident.

Electric voltage will disperse in ripples away from the point where electricity is going to ground, and anyone crossing the area or touching the wires, could be severely or fatally injured. People inside the vehicle in such an accident are safe, because they are not the path to ground.

It's important to warn those who come upon such an accident to stay away, as approaching an accident scene involving power lines can be deadly. That was the case when a Good Samaritan approached a wrecked car near Jacksonville, FL, and was electrocuted when he stepped over a downed wire. The 52 year old man attempted to assist a motorist whose car swerved to avoid hitting a deer and collided with a utility pole holding an electric line. The motorist was seeking help to be freed from the car when the tragedy occurred.

Hall stresses that anyone approaching the scene of an accident involving power lines should wait until utility linemen can assure the lines are de-energized. She points to the tragic death of an Alexis, IL, woman who was acting as a Good Samaritan when two teenagers were injured in a collision with a utility pole. As the woman ran to aid one of the teens thrown from the vehicle, she touched a fallen power line and was instantly electrocuted.

The only time to consider exiting the vehicle before utility crews arrive is because of fire – and those instances are very rare. Only then should the occupant jump free without touching the vehicle and ground at the same time, then hop with feet together to prevent current flow. It's almost always safest to stay in the vehicle.

It's critical to know how and what to do in accidents involving power lines. And with the snow and ice on the roadways recently, we want to let everyone know the safest options when coming into contact with a pole and electrical lines. Learn more at www.SafeElectricity.org or www.ccppd.com.

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For more information and videos on electrical safety, visit www.SafeElectricity.org. Safe Electricity is a program of the Energy Education Council, a non-profit organization dedicated to promoting electrical safety and energy efficiency, and supported by a coalition of hundreds of organizations, including electric utilities, educators and other entities committed to promoting safe use of electricity.