

# Downed wires & electrical hazards

## ACTION CHECKLIST

**Keep away from fallen wires, damaged electrical equipment and anything touching them, including water, fences and vehicles. Assume wires are live even when they are quiet or the neighbourhood has no power. Do not attempt a rescue by touching a person or object in contact with electricity. Contact the utility or emergency services from a safe place.**

### [ ] Stay back

Do not approach to determine whether a wire is live. Current can travel through wet ground and conductive objects. Keep others and animals away.

### [ ] Avoid connected objects

Do not touch fences, trees, vehicles or debris that may contact a wire. Do not use a stick or tool to move it.

### [ ] Stay out of flooded electrical areas

Never enter water to reach a breaker, appliance or person near damaged electrical systems. Use qualified help.

### [ ] Warn from safety

Tell people to avoid the area from your safe location. Report a clear location without approaching for a photograph.

### [ ] Do not restore damaged systems

Leave flooded, scorched or broken equipment off until qualified personnel assess it. A restored grid does not make damaged wiring safe.

## WATCH FOR

Do not assume a fixed visible distance proves safety. Lines may reenergise without warning; no spark or hum is not an all-clear.

## IF HELP IS UNAVAILABLE

Keep the hazard avoided if the utility cannot be reached. Do not move a wire to open a road or restore access; arrange a different safe route.

Updated 2026-10-02 | Civilian educational guidance. Seek qualified help when reachable and safe; do not delay immediate protective action.

Full guide: <https://ospreyzero.com/emergencies/downed-power-lines/>

CDC · Protect yourself during a power outage

CDC · Avoid carbon monoxide poisoning