

Trapped by a power line? Stay put

These tips from CVPS are part of a continuing series to educate Vermonters about electrical safety and hazards.

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We constantly remind customers to stay away from downed power lines, but this month we want to look at a related issue: what to do if a power line comes down on your car during a storm or in an accident.

How you respond could be the difference between life and death.

If a power line lands on your car while you are in it, stay inside the car until help arrives and the power is safely turned off. Do not try to leave the vehicle unless it is unsafe to remain there, for example if there is a fire.

In that case, don't panic – calm, deliberate action is required. Slowly open the door, but do not get out until you can be certain there is not a power line in a spot where you could contact it. Look up and down.

If there is no power line blocking your way, place both feet on the edge of the door jamb, brace yourself and jump clear of the vehicle so you do not touch metal and the ground at the same time.

For more safety tips, visit www.cvps.com/safety, and be sure to check out our newsletter, Keeping Current, which comes with your bill each month, for more from CVPS.

Do not run! Jump or hop away from the scene until you are at least 50 feet away, then be sure others stay away too.

If someone else is trapped in a vehicle that is in contact with a downed power line, it's natural to want to help, but the best thing to do is to contact emergency personnel and CVPS, stay 50 feet away, and verbally urge the person to remain calm until help arrives.

Remembering the following could save your life:

- It is impossible to tell by looking at it whether a power line is energized.
- Touching anything that is in contact with a power line, including injured or trapped victims, vehicles or trees, could be fatal. Even a puddle or wet snow can conduct electricity.
- Never use a stick, piece of rope, hose, rubber gloves or other items to attempt to move a power line, as they will not offer any protection.



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