Electricity can shock, burn, or kill if not handled properly. It always seeks all paths to ground, and human beings are a path to ground. If you, or any other type of conductive material (metal, wood, trees, machinery/equipment, tools, etc.) get too close to (within 30 feet) or touch power lines, you may provide this immediate path to ground through your body. This will result in severe injury or death.

PUD line crews wear special gear and use protective equipment when working with power lines because of the danger of electrocution.

If your job requires excavation, call 811 at least two working days BEFORE you dig to prevent an accidental interruption of service. All utilities will then mark their lines so you know their location before you start to dig. It’s a FREE service and is required by law. If you accidentally sever a utility line, you are responsible for all repair costs. And you might get hurt!
Before Starting to Work Let Us Help You

Be observant. If you have work to do near power lines or power facilities, always consider them to be energized or HOT. Call Snohomish County PUD first. We want to help review safe working conditions for you at your site.

If necessary for your safety, we may decide to turn off electricity or take other measures. Because it takes time to do this work, plan your job ahead and let us know. For example, if it is feasible to take lines out of service, advance notice is required. There may be a charge for work performed by the PUD. If you need more information or have safety concerns, call the PUD at 425-783-8272 during business hours.

Work at a safe distance from all power lines and facilities. Ten feet is considered a minimum clearance for objects, tools and people when working near overhead lines of zero to 50,000 volts. Never assume power installations are insulated.

Plan your work ahead. If your equipment will be operating in the vicinity of a power facility, check to make sure there is no possibility of accidentally striking a line or digging into an underground cable. See “811” information on front page.

Don’t get close to or touch electrical equipment. NEVER attempt to move or raise electric lines or equipment. If you need help to make power lines safe, or need to report damage or hazards, call the PUD at 425-783-8272. Also call if you have any doubts or questions about the safety of the work area.

If an Accident Does Happen, Don’t Panic!

There are a number of basic steps to follow in case of an electrical accident:

- **Do not touch** the injured or any lines or equipment in contact with the injured. Even if it appears that the accident caused the line or equipment to be de-energized, use caution. **Call 911** and report the accident immediately.

- **Always assume the power lines are HOT.** Modern electric lines usually relay back into service and become energized several times within a matter of seconds following an accident. It’s also possible under certain conditions that the system may not see the problem and may not de-energize the line or equipment at all.

- **Prevent others from approaching** the victim and any electrically energized vehicles, objects, or structures.

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Emergency Instructions for Accidental Contact With Electrical Sources:

1. **DO NOT PANIC!**

2. **Do not touch** the victim or anything in contact with the victim. They could still be energized. Keep others from approaching the victim or area.

3. **Try to de-energize** the electrical source if it is safe and possible to do at the circuit breaker (customer-owned equipment only).

4. **Send for help** — call 911 for life-threatening situations, and if there are power lines on the ground, call the PUD at 425-783-1001.

5. Once the electrical source has been de-energized, **provide immediate first-aid** to the victim.

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What to do in case of shock

Every person who works near electrical equipment should acquaint themselves with rescue techniques:

- The **first step is to break the connection** between the victim and the power source. If possible, do this by turning off the power. The next best thing is to remove the victim from the voltage source – without endangering yourself.

- As soon as you can touch the victim safely, **apply artificial respiration (CPR).**

- **Speed is essential.** Any delay at all greatly reduces the chance of recovery. Of some 600 cases studies, over 70 percent of those receiving artificial respiration within three minutes recovered. Just one added minute of delay dropped the figure to 58 percent. If there is no heart or respiratory action and treatment is delayed 5 minutes, death is virtually certain. Give artificial respiration and chest massage immediately.

The electronic version (PDF) of this issue is available at [www.snopud.com/powernews](http://www.snopud.com/powernews)