
Talking Points

Safety after the Storm

- Storm debris can hide dangers, such as downed power lines. Use caution in any cleanup effort. Any downed or sagging power lines, or stray wires and debris in contact with them should all be considered energized and potentially dangerous. Stay away, warn others to stay away, and call the utility.
- If power lines come down on or around your vehicle, call for help and remain in the vehicle. Do not attempt to get out until a utility lineman can assure you the power has been turned off.
- Use caution at intersections where traffic lights may be without power. Stop at all railroad crossings.
- Before entering storm-damaged buildings, make sure electricity and gas are turned off.
- Never step into a flooded basement if water could be covering electrical outlets or appliances that are plugged in. The water could be energized.
- Do not attempt to shut power off at the breaker box if you must stand in water to do so.
- Stay out of flooded rooms and basements until you are assured the power has been cut off.
- Electric motors can be damaged when wet and should not be used after a storm until they have been inspected and approved by a professional. It may be necessary to have some of them repaired or replaced.
- Do not use electric yard tools to clean up after a storm if it is raining or the ground is wet.
- Only use generators outdoors. Connect lights and appliances using extension cords. Do not connect the generator directly to the home circuitry unless there is a transfer safety switch to isolate the power. Without that safety feature, electricity could “back feed” into the utility system, creating danger for anyone near power lines, particularly utility crews working to restore power.

(See also “Generator Safety Talking Points” for more)

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.