



**NEW JERSEY PUBLIC EMPLOYEES
OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH**

EMERGENCY SAFETY BULLETIN

ALL NEW JERSEY LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES

Response Procedures Concerning Downed Electrical Lines

As a result of a recent investigation involving two New Jersey police officers who were seriously injured after making contact with a downed energized electrical power line, in the interest of officer safety, PEOSH is issuing this Safety Bulletin so that all New Jersey law enforcement agencies can assure that their members are prepared to safely respond to emergencies involving downed power lines.

FOR MORE INFO:

HOTLINE: 800-624-1644

WEB: nj.gov/labor/safetyandhealth

CONSULTATION

 **P.O. Box 953
Trenton, NJ 08625-0953**
 **(609) 633-2587**
 **safetytraining@dol.nj.gov**

ENFORCEMENT

 **P.O. Box 386
Trenton, NJ 08625-0386**
 **(609) 633-3896**
 **peosha@dol.nj.gov**

It is required by PEOSH regulations that workers who face a risk of shock be trained in electrical safety-related work practices. Suggested training points for law enforcement officers responding to downed wires and storm calls with wires down (such as tangled in trees) include but are not limited to:

- Operate as if all downed or low-hanging wires are energized. This includes wires presumed to be telecommunication (phone, fiber optic, FiOS) wires.
- Do not attempt to touch or cut any wires with any tools or devices such as bolt cutters.
- Do not use an object (such as a tree branch, wooden pole, etc.) to move a wire.
- Approach the scene with caution from inside the patrol vehicle. At night, use the vehicle's spotlight or flashlight from inside to assess the scene for safety. Look up and down for wires, transformers and other electrical equipment and signs of failure (i.e. arcing, popping, etc.).
- Avoid parking under damaged (i.e. leaning) poles, wires or over utility manholes. Look for wire ends (dangling or on the ground), water, metal objects close to wires and any victims.
- Secure the area and deny entry. Consider a suitable protective radius following guidance from local power authorities. Generally accepted restricted distance is a minimum of one full span (two poles) between broken, downed or sagging lines.
- Use police vehicles, tape, cones, barricades or officers to keep pedestrians, bicycles and motor vehicles away from the area. Be sure not to attach tape to metallic objects that may be energized.



**OFFICE OF PUBLIC EMPLOYEES
OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY
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- Do not allow vehicular traffic to cross downed wires across a roadway.
- If safe to do so, obtain a pole number and relay the exact location of the hazard to communications so that they may notify the appropriate utilities authority.
- Remain on scene per departmental policy.

- **Obtain additional guidance and training from fire department and emergency medical staff concerning proper actions at incidents involving people trapped in motor vehicles secondary to a crash. MOTOR VEHICLES MAY BE ENERGIZED. Learn about touch and step potential by visiting [OSHA.gov/electrical](https://www.osha.gov/electrical).**

REQUIRED:

- Employers must report all work-related fatalities to PEOSH within eight (8) hours
- Employers must report all work-related in-patient hospitalizations, amputations, and losses of an eye to PEOSH **within twenty-four (24) hours.**

24-HOUR PEOSH REPORTING HOTLINE:



(800) 624-1644



FAX: (609) 292-3749