

CITY OF EUGENE
PUBLIC WORKS PWM & POS DIVISIONS
Procedure

Subject:	Downed Utility Line Safety During Emergency Operations / Storm Response		Document No:	1153
Last Reviewed By:	08/20/2018	Original Date:	4/10/2018	APWA No: NA
Approved By:	Craig Carnagey, POS Director and Scott Milovich, PWM Director		Date Approved:	9/13/2018

Purpose

To clarify expectations when staff encounter a downed utility line, especially during emergency operations.

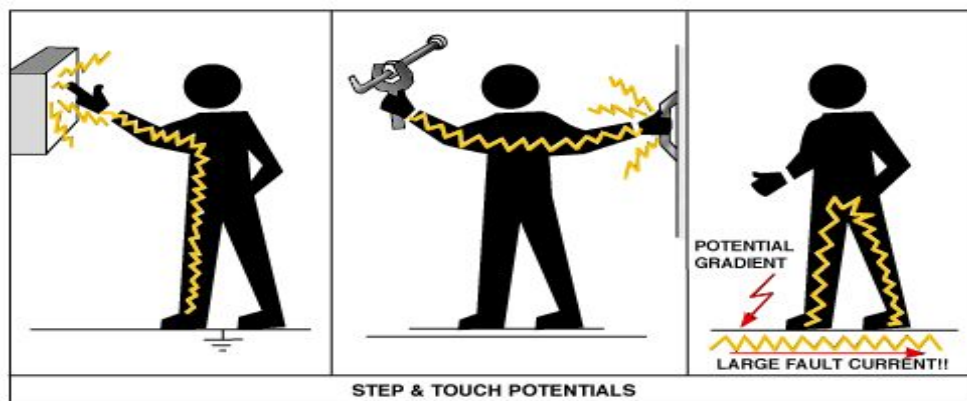
References

None

Definitions

ECC = the Public Works Emergency Command Center located at 1820 Roosevelt
 EWEB = Eugene Water & Electric Board
 PW-ECC = the Public Works Emergency Command Center

Procedure (Include reporting requirements and precautionary steps in this section)



Downed Utility Line Safety:

- The first priority is YOUR safety!
- Always assume any downed line is energized! This includes power lines, communication lines and any other utility lines. A qualified high voltage line technician (or their designated contract resource) from the electrical utility (i.e., EWEB) is the only source that can determine that the situation is “made safe” for you to return to do your work. The City of Eugene does NOT have any qualified staff to make this determination.
- Remain at least 50 feet away from the downed line or other potentially energized item (i.e., guard rail, fence, vehicle, and tree).

- Don't drive over a downed utility or other overhead line. Assume all downed utility lines are energized!
- Be aware of the potential electrical contact paths including step and touch potential as noted in the diagram.
- If a utility line falls on your vehicle while you are in it, stay in place until it's been de-energized UNLESS a greater hazard exists (i.e., your vehicle is on fire). Call 9-1-1! They will make contact with EWEB to respond. Call your supervisor or lead worker after you have rescue on the way.
- If you have to exit the vehicle with a utility line on it, remember to be aware of step potential! You will need to exit your vehicle without touching any part of the vehicle and landing with both feet on the ground at the same time. Walk slowly and carefully away until you are at least 50 feet way from the potentially energized source. [Video](#)
- If you remain in your vehicle and someone comes to help you, please warn them to stay away. They have the potential to be electrocuted by trying to rescue you.
- Be aware of the potential for back feed into the electrical system from privately owned generators. Site assessment – are there lights on in a house while the rest of the area is dark?

What to do if you encounter a downed wire: Stay at least 50 feet away!

Report the downed utility line

- If the utility line is on your vehicle, contact 9-1-1 for emergency assistance and stay put! Call your supervisor or lead worker after you have emergency responders on the way.
- While the Public Works Emergency Command Center (ECC) is active, call radio call number 400 (ECC during emergencies) or by phone to (541) 682-4911 unless otherwise directed. If you are unable to reach the ECC, contact your Operation Branch Supervisor, the Operations Chief, the Safety Officer, the Incident Commander or the Office Call Center at (541) 682-4800.
- During all other times, please contact your supervisor or lead worker for assistance. If you are unable to reach them, please contact the Office.

Information to Include

- Include a detailed location (pole # or nearest home address is best) and a description of the situation – what's happening in the field and what hazard is it creating.
- Report any other hazards and road closure to the Emergency Command Center.
- ECC staff will note the downed utility line, road obstruction or road closure in the appropriate system (MMS-RED or ArcGIS online)

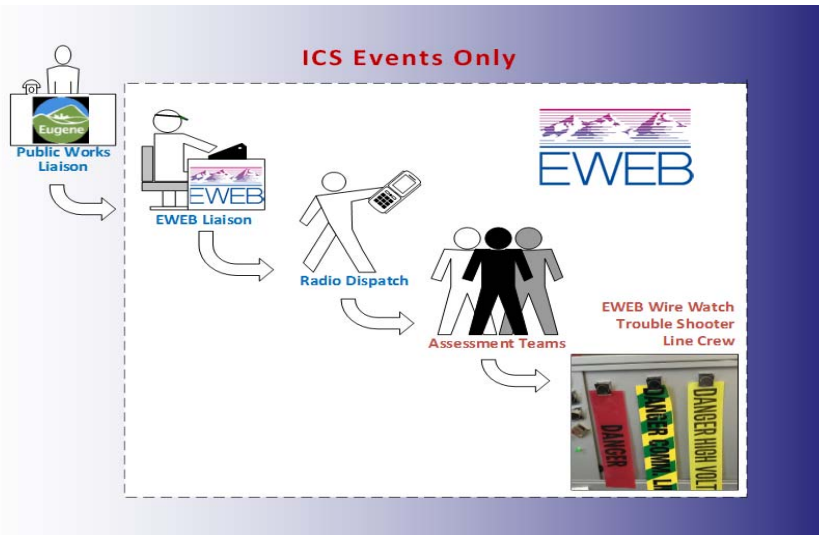
Coordinating with the Utility Company

- Do NOT contact utility directly when the Public Works Emergency Command Center (PW-ECC) is active. The utility company's dispatch staff are unprepared to address our priorities. This contact needs to be handled through the Liaison Officer (when assigned) or through the Incident Commander.
- Public Works ECC staff will work with the Liaison Officer to determine the priority for response and will provide the information to the utility for response
- Priorities for response will include life safety (emergency response activity), arcing/sparking electrical lines and those that obstruct the only access into a location.

Protecting the Public

- Some hazards in which the road may need to be blocked include an electrical line or tree down across an entire roadway or part of the roadway.
- Road closures on streets classified as arterials or collectors (usually our Priority 1 and some Priority 2 streets in the Ice and Snow Plan) may pose a significant hazard to motorists and will be a priority for us to address.

- If there is a hazard to the public and, from at 50 feet away from the hazard, you are safely able to block the road using yellow DANGER tape, please report your intent to the ECC, before handling this task. It's important that we use the yellow DANGER tape when possible to mirror the look of the tape that EWEB will be using. (see diagram on last page)
- If you are able to safely get to the other side of the hazard by driving an alternate route AND maintaining at least 50 feet away from any potentially electrically energized items, consider marking the hazard from that side as well. Do NOT walk or drive through the area to mark the other side. YOUR safety is first priority!
- If you need assistance marking the hazard, please report to the Emergency Command Center. A Road Closure team or Scout may be asked to support these requests. If you need assistance during routine operations, please contact your supervisor, lead worker or the office staff for assistance.
- Depending on the location, staff may be asked to standby at a safe location near the hazard.
- If you see people attempting to bypass the closure, please alert them to the hazard if you are able. However, you are not expected to stop people from entering the area or to rescue them. Remember YOUR safety is the first priority.



Eugene Water and Electric Board (EWEB) process when they receive our report of a downed utility line during emergency response:

- EWEB Assessment team – This team will mark the perimeter with yellow high-voltage caution tape to prevent the public from access to this area. If there is a need for constant watch a downed electrical line, the EWEB Assessment team will remain there to protect anyone from entering the area and contact EWEB to have a Wire Watch team assigned to report to that location.
- EWEB Wire Watch team – This team will report and remain on site until the EWEB high-voltage qualified staff arrive to troubleshoot. The EWEB Wire Watch team may place additional caution tape, warning lights or flagging to keep people away from the hazard.
- EWEB high-voltage Qualified staff (Line Techs) - EWEB qualified staff will “Identify, Isolate, Test and Ground” before they determine it has been “made safe” for us to do our work.
- Once the downed electrical line has been “made safe”, EWEB staff will roll up or cut the downed line and place one of the three types of DANGER tape (as indicated on the last page). The line should be clearly cut away from any trees and the roadway.
- If there is any doubt about whether or not the downed utility line is energized, consider it energized and report it back through your chain of command. YOUR safety is your first priority!