

Aerial equipment safety



Contacting power lines with aerial equipment can be a million-dollar mistake. Often these events place firefighters' lives in jeopardy and destroy expensive equipment. There is an easy solution: Use a spotter!

Aerial apparatus are some of the most effective – and dangerous – tools used by the fire service. You and your crew must be constantly vigilant – even during non-emergency operations – to avoid contacting or coming close to power lines and energizing aerial equipment.

Distance and situational awareness are your best friends

Before raising any ladders or extending aerial equipment, confirm that **“the overhead is clear”** and identify the location of all overhead power lines in the vicinity, including the service drops. Follow these precautions to ensure your aerial equipment stays a safe distance from all overhead lines:

Position apparatus so that fully extended aerial equipment remains **at least 10 feet away** from power lines up to 50 kV, as lines may move, sag or fall. Higher voltages require greater distance. Remember, 10 feet is the **minimum** distance. **Always maintain the maximum distance possible.**

Position a dedicated spotter on the ground at least 30 feet away from the aerial apparatus to monitor the deployment of ladders and aerial equipment, ensuring they remain a safe distance away from power lines and service wires.

DO NOT stand on the ground when operating aerial equipment. People on the ground are at the greatest risk of electrical shock.

In case of power line contact

If your aerial apparatus contacts a power line and there is no immediate danger:

- **Stay on the equipment and call National Grid.**
- **Warn others to stay at least 30 feet away.**
- If you can do so safely, **move the apparatus away from the power line.**
- If you cannot move the equipment, **stay put until National Grid personnel inform you the line has been de-energized.**

If you must get off the equipment due to fire or other imminent danger, follow these steps to stay safe:

- **Do NOT step off the equipment, and do NOT touch the equipment and the ground at the same time.**
- **Jump clear of the equipment and land with your feet together.**
- **Shuffle away with small steps**, keeping your feet close together and on the ground at all times.
- **Continue shuffling until you are at least 30 feet away from distribution lines and 100 feet away from transmission lines.**
- **Do not run or take large steps.**

For more safety information and training, visit firstresponder.ngridsafety.com.
To report emergencies, call 911 and National Grid immediately.