



Power line safety during structure fires

When fighting a structure fire, you are almost always exposed to energized power lines. Contact with these lines can cause serious injuries or even death. Follow these precautions to avoid electrical contact when approaching or de-energizing a structure during a fire.



Approaching the structure

Follow these precautions when approaching a fire involving structural components:

- **Maintain a safe distance.** Keep yourself and your vehicles, tools and equipment *at least 10 feet away* from power lines **up to 50 kV**. Higher voltages require greater distances. Confirm line voltages and clearances with National Grid, and always maintain the *maximum* distance possible. When water must be used to protect exposures, stay at least 30 feet away from energized objects. Use a 30° fog pattern at 100 psi – NEVER a straight stream.
- **Perform a 360° size-up.** While maintaining a safe distance, walk 360 degrees around the structure to identify the location of power lines, service wires and weatherheads.
- **Be alert for conductive objects.** Fire may compromise electric wiring inside the walls of a structure, energizing objects such as metal awnings and siding. Take precautions when using aluminum ladders around structures.

- **Use a spotter.** Position a dedicated spotter on the ground to monitor the deployment and placement of ladders and aerial equipment, ensuring that they remain a safe distance away from power lines and service wires. Do NOT stand on the ground when operating equipment. When aerial equipment contacts a power line, people on the ground are at the greatest risk of electrical shock.
- **Watch out for weatherheads.** If you slip and fall against the service mast, pulling wires loose, you may risk being severely shocked or electrocuted. Be sure to keep hose streams away from the underside of weatherheads, where fine cracks in a gasket could let in water and pose a shock risk.
- **Anticipate downed service lines.** Overhead service lines attached to weatherheads may burn free and fall to the ground, posing a shock hazard for anyone nearby. Fallen or sagging service wires may also energize metal gutters, awnings, siding or other conductive objects. Protect yourself by anticipating these shock hazards and remaining *at least 10 feet away*.

De-energizing the structure

If National Grid confirms that the structure must be de-energized, do NOT pull the meter or disconnect the service wire. Doing either is extremely dangerous! Turn off power at the main switch ONLY if you are trained to do so and National Grid tells you it is safe to do so.

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