

# Volusia County Fire Services Safety Gram



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## Dealing with Fallen Power Lines

Electrical power lines may have been knocked down by trees and wind. If you come across abnormal situations, such as fallen power lines, don't expose yourself to a risk while trying to eliminate the danger. Always assume that the wires are energized. Inform the power company through dispatch so power crews can be dispatched.

It is important to note that in modern electrical distribution systems power lines may be fed from more than one source or direction, therefore, even when a wire is down on both ends, it may still be alive and hazardous.

Action to be taken on arrival at the scene:

1. Before getting out of the apparatus, make sure you are parked well away from the downed power line. If it is nighttime, use a flashlight to examine the surroundings carefully from the apparatus window. **If you are parked over or near the downed power line, move your apparatus well out of harm's way, a distance of at least 20 to 25 feet or two poles away.**
2. Locate all wire ends. They may be on the ground or in the air. If a live power line is touching a car or truck or any other metal object, use extreme caution. Also a pool of water may conduct electricity if a live power line has fallen into it. **Stand back or stay in your apparatus approximately 20 to 25 feet or two power poles away.**
3. If possible, guard the danger zone and call the power company.
4. Keep people away from the downed power line or sagging power line and other electrical hazards. **If a power line has fallen on a metal fence or other metal object, electricity may be conducted to other points some distance away. In fact, the ground itself can be energized to a dangerous level near the fallen power line.**
5. Do not attempt to move any fallen power line. Wait for the power company personnel.

September 1, 2010

### Dispersion level Chart

Dispersion Range 0-40 is stable air, low fire intensity, less long range spotting.

Dispersion Range 41-70 is moderate unstable air, increased fire intensity and long range spotting.

Dispersion Range 70+ is unstable air, high amount of upper lifting, intense fire activity, potential for long range spotting and plume dominated wildfires.

Fire-line Handbook Jan. '98

- F**ight fire aggressively, but provide for safety first.
  - I**nitiate all action based on current and expected fire behavior.
  - R**ecognize current weather conditions and obtain forecasts.
  - E**nsure instructions are given and understood.
  - O**btain current information on status.
  - R**emain in communication with crewmembers, your supervisor, and adjoining forces.
  - D**etermine safety zones and escape routes.
  - E**stablish lookouts in potentially hazardous situations.
  - R**emain in control at all times.
  - S**tay alert, keep calm, act decisively.
- NWCG Handbook 3