19-05 - Responding to Downed Power Lines

Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department
NEWSLETTER
Field Operations Support Services

RESPONDING TO DOWNED POWER LINES

The purpose of this newsletter is to assist field personnel with the safe handling of incidents involving downed electrical power lines, which are typically caused by weather or traffic collisions. Consider the following when responding to this type of incident:

Initial Scene Assessment:

- Observe the location of downed lines;
- Stay a safe distance away from power lines (at least 30 feet in each direction);
- Be aware of adjacent hazards, such as water (rain, pools, fountains, street drains);
- Look for persons down;
- Resist the urge to approach where downed power lines are present; and
- Coordinate assisting units according to your initial assessment.

Provide Safety to the Public:

- Block vehicle and pedestrian traffic, and coordinate a safety perimeter;
- Make notifications to the utility company via station/unit desk and include;
    - The closest address, and power utility pole number on the metal placard;
    - If persons are in danger, the best path of approach to the scene; and
    - Notify them if units will remain on scene until they arrive.

Power Lines Down Due to a Traffic Collision – No Immediate Threat:

- Resist the urge to approach;
- If occupant(s) is conscious, advise them to remain in the vehicle;
- Wait for the utility company to arrive and de-energize the line; and
- Notify the fire department to initiate rescue efforts.

Power Lines Down Due to a Traffic Collision – Immediate Threat to Occupant(s) of Vehicle (Fire, Hazardous Materials, and Life Threatening Medical Emergencies):

- If an occupant(s) is conscious and ambulatory, do not approach the vehicle;

- Instruct the occupant(s) who is ambulatory to “hop” out of the vehicle with both feet together and instruct them to avoid touching the vehicle once they are out;
- Instruct the occupant(s) to shuffle their feet, in order to maintain contact with the ground. Both feet should keep contact with the ground until he/she is a safe distance away from the vehicle (minimum of 30 feet, if possible); and
- Keep in mind the risk of the vehicle or the ground being energized with the downed power line, regardless of how it appears.

See the summarized video in the link below for additional information:

http://intranet.lasd.sheriff.sdn/intranet/sites/vpu/content/Edison.html

Questions regarding the content of this newsletter may be directed to Field Operations Support Services, at [REDACTED TEXT]

References:

Southern California Edison Company, “Electrical Safety for First Responders,” Produced in 2016, Complete Video (50:21)

http://sce.firstresponderonline.com/videos/index.html