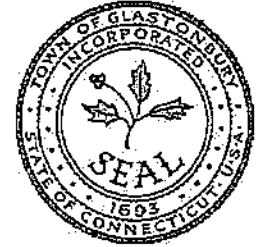




**GLASTONBURY FIRE DEPARTMENT  
STANDARD OPERATING GUIDELINES**



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SOG NUMBER: FDO-509                      ISSUED DATE: 12-14-2011                      EFFECTIVE DATE: 1-15-12  
REVISION #: 1                                      REVISED DATE: 01-11-16                      EFFECTIVE DATE: 01-11-16  
CATEGORY: EMERGENCY OPERATIONS – GENERAL  
SUB- CATEGORY: FIRE GROUND OPERATIONS  
SUBJECT: DOWNED UTILITY WIRES  
RELATED GUIDELINES: FDO-107, FDO-511, FDO-512, HZT-202

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**\*USE EXTREME CAUTION WHEN APPROACHING ANY TYPE OF DOWN UTILITY WIRE(S)\***

Section I – Introduction

A. Objective

To provide a common operating guideline for use in the response to downed utility lines and other related electrical equipment hazards.

B. Applicability

This applies to any structure fire response were electrical power lines, including cable television lines, telephone lines or related electrical equipment may be involved.

C. References

Eversource Presentation  
The United Illuminating Company's – First Responder Beware Electrical Safety Trainer's Guide

Section II – General

Treat all downed wires, including telephone and cable television wires, as energized and dangerous until proven otherwise. It is impossible to determine by its appearance if a wire is energized. Some wires will jump, whip around, curl up, make loud sounds or emit showers of sparks, while others will lie silent – and deadly.

Section III – Establish a Safety Zone

A safety zone should extend a minimum of two full span lengths of wire (2 telephone poles) in each direction beyond the downed wire. When establishing a safety zone keep the following items in mind:

- Stresses may be placed on poles adjacent to the downed wires causing them to break and fall

- Wires can slip through insulators and sag to the ground in adjacent spans of wires
- Always be on the alert for conductive materials that may be in contact with the fallen wires such as metal fences, guard rails and metal buildings. The safety zone will have to be increased to include them.
- Continue to secure the area until relieved by a utility representative or other authorized person.
- Be aware that when a body is in contact with a wire it may be energized. Do not touch the injured individual until the wire has been cleared from the body.

#### Section IV – Establish a Safety Zone – House Service Entry Cable

In the event a house service entry cable is down (telephone pole to house overhead) a 360 degree safety zone perimeter should be established around the effected area. When establishing a “perimeter” safety zone keep the following items in mind:

- Always be on the alert for conductive materials that may be in contact with the fallen wires such as metal fences. The safety zone will have to be increased to include them.
- The area is to remain secured until relieved by a utility representative or other authorized person.
- Be aware that when a body is in contact with a wire it may be energized. Do not touch the injured individual until the wire has been cleared from the body.

#### Section V – Notifying the Utility Company

Eversource has developed a guideline known as Priority Level System for Emergency Response Involving Electrical Hazards. The priority level is broken down into three levels:

1. Priority Level One (Life Threatening)
  - a. A “Level 1” exists in situations where a person or persons cannot be rescued until the electrical company either shuts off the power or disconnects a serve line at the scene. This is a life-threatening situation.
    - i. Example 1: A person (conscious/unconscious) is trapped in a vehicle with a fallen power line lying across it. Injuries are unknown.
    - ii. Example 2: A structure is on fire and a person or persons are trapped. The electric service to the structure is energized limiting appropriate action such as raising a ladder, etc.
2. Priority Level Two (Hindering Operations)
  - a. A “Level 2” exists in a situation where an electrical hazard exists that is hindering operations, but is not life threatening.
    - i. Example 1: A structure is on fire, it has been confirmed that no one is inside. The electric service to the structure is energized and the fire department is unable to cut power at the fuse/circuit breaker box.
    - ii. Example 2: A structure fire is in the process of being extinguished. Service wires to the building are hindering or obstructing full access for overhaul and other related operations.
3. Priority Level Three ( Electrical Hazard Exists -- Non-Threatening)
  - a. A “Level 3” exists in situations where an electrical hazard exists but is in a location non-threatening or of no immediate threat to life or property.
    - i. Example 1: Wires down or transformer fire. Police or fire standing by securing the scene with an appropriate safety zone.

Section VI -- Other Safety Points to Consider Around Downed Wires:

**\*\*\*NEVER ATTEMPT TO MOVE OR CUT ANY DOWNED CONDUCTORS\*\*\***

1. Only properly trained utility personnel, using approved procedures and highly specialized tools, should move or cut ANY wire.
2. Wood or fiberglass pike poles are not the same as the insulated hot sticks used by utility personnel. They most likely contain sufficient moisture and/or are contaminated enough to be conductive.
3. Any high-voltage wire, when disturbed, can get out of control. It may dance about curl up and strike you or bystanders.
4. Keep in mind that your firefighter's boots are only designed to keep your feet dry. They will not insulate or isolate you from a voltage source.
5. High voltage wires are NOT insulated. The protective coating found on some wires is to protect the wire from damage, not to insulate it.
6. Be particularly wary during storms or hours of darkness. It is often difficult to see downed or sagging wires. Always use a light when moving about.

Section VII -- Approval:

Fire Chief

Michael P. King

Date of Approval:

1/11/16