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If you hit a pole, remain calm and stay put

Essential Energy is reminding motorists to remain vigilant on icy and wet roads this winter to minimise the risk of colliding with roadside electrical infrastructure.

General Manager Safety, HR and Environment, David Nardi, said if a vehicle accidentally hits a power pole, streetlight or pillar box, the safest option is to remain in a vehicle – unless the situation is life threatening.

“While the first instinct may be to get out of the vehicle, fallen powerlines can pose a serious risk to drivers and passengers,” David said.

“The vehicle may become live as well as anything else in contact with the powerlines, such as fences or trees.”

Bystanders must stay at least eight metres away from fallen powerlines and anything in contact with them and call Essential Energy immediately on 13 20 80. If the situation is life threatening, call emergency services on 000 (triple zero).

“Try not to panic, remain calm and stay in the vehicle until the power has been turned off and powerlines or electricity cables removed,” David said.

“An emergency evacuation is extremely dangerous and should only be attempted as a last resort such as if the vehicle is on fire.”

If an emergency exit is necessary, jump well clear of the vehicle, land with your feet together, and don't touch the vehicle, fall forward or backward, or allow your feet to step apart. Jump or shuffle with your feet together until you are at least eight metres clear of the vehicle, powerlines or anything else in contact with them.

“Fog, snow and ice are added risks for drivers during winter so exercise extreme caution in cold weather conditions. Allocate extra travel time to get to your destination and plan a route that avoids areas prone to poor visibility or black ice,” David said.

For more information on electrical safety, visit: www.essentialenergy.com.au/safety.

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