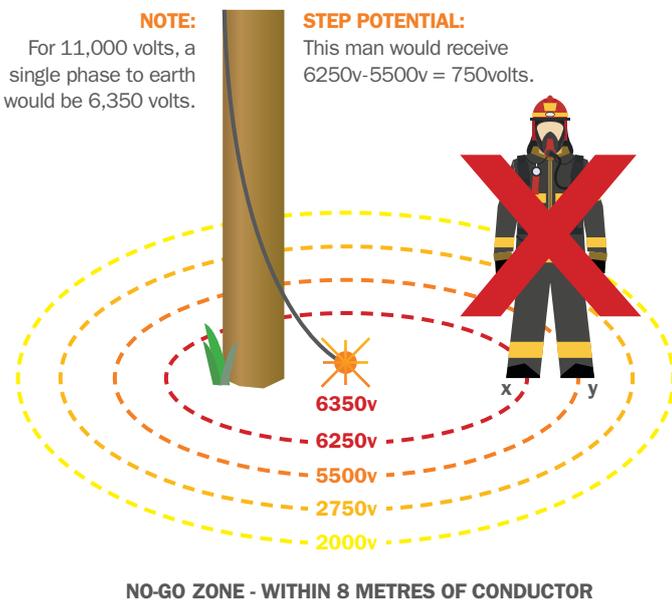


# Emergency response to a powerline incident



## What happens if your vehicle contacts live overhead/underground powerlines?

1. The vehicle will become live at the voltage contacted and the electricity will attempt to pass through the vehicle to the ground
2. Anything else in contact with the powerlines will also become live, such as fences and trees etc.
3. Electricity will create a potentially dangerous field around anything in contact with the powerline for approximately eight metres.



## What should you do if your vehicle contacts overhead/underground powerlines?

1. Try not to panic, remain calm and stay in the vehicle until the power has been isolated and the powerlines removed, don't risk being electrocuted by attempting to leave the vehicle
2. Advise anyone near the incident site to stay a minimum of eight metres from the vehicle and anything else in contact with the powerlines
3. Contact Essential Energy immediately on **13 20 80** to switch off the power and call the emergency services (**000**) reporting wires down and a life-threatening situation
4. Always treat powerlines and anything in contact with the powerlines as live.

## What should happen if the driver of the vehicle needs to be evacuated?

An emergency evacuation is extremely dangerous and should only be attempted as a last resort such as if the vehicle is on fire. Remember, never approach the vehicle to assist in the evacuation and always treat wires as live.

1. It's critical that you jump well clear to avoid contact with the vehicle and ground at the same time
2. When you jump, ensure you land with your feet together. Do not touch the vehicle, fall forward or backward, or allow your feet to step apart
3. You must 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



It is recommended that operators of high machinery practice this jump/shuffle technique on a regular basis

4. Once clear, do not return to the vehicle for any reason.



# Emergency response to a powerline incident



## What causes the tyres to explode?

When a vehicle contacts overhead and underground powerlines, it causes an electrical current to flow through it. The electrical current can cause tyres to explode at the time of contact and also start burning inside the tyres for up to 24 hours. This can create a build-up of gases and heat causing significant pressure and heat to distort the rims and tyres of the vehicle causing the tyres to violently explode at a later time.



## What hazards are created by tyres during and after a vehicle contacts powerlines?

- > Tyres become conductive because of the carbon black and metal they have in them, allowing current to flow through the vehicle to ground



- > Material from the exploding tyre and surrounding area, such as gravel can be thrown many meters with the potential to injure people nearby.

## What should you do if your vehicle contacts powerlines?

- > Contact Essential Energy immediately on **13 20 80** to switch off the power. Remain with the vehicle until the power has been isolated and the powerlines removed
- > Once safe, the vehicle needs to be isolated as the hazard posed by an exploding tyre can extend to 300m and for 24 hours after contact
- > It is imperative that you avoid being in line with the side of the tyres/rims as they may explode.

**SAFETY FIRST**

- > Be aware that powerlines may fall and as powerlines can be re-energised automatically, all powerlines need to be treated as live
- > A competent person should inspect all tyres, bearings and brakes before continued use after powerline contact
- > Stay a minimum of 8 metres from the vehicle and anything else in contact with the powerlines.

