



Utility Work: Before and After Severe Weather

Severe weather, such as thunderstorms, tornados and hurricanes can expose employees to high water, damaged poles, lightning, strong winds and electrical hazards. Outside technicians should take a moment and reaffirm their commitment to follow all safety procedures when providing customer service during adverse conditions. Increased emphasis on the precautions listed below will reduce your risk of injury while working in this type of environment.

- Maintain a safe speed to prevent vehicle hydroplaning on wet pavement.
- Allow a minimum 3-4 seconds following distance with the vehicle ahead.
- When the water rises watch for poisonous snakes on areas of high ground.
- Always wear safety glasses to protect your eyes from wind blown debris.
- Take shelter in the vehicle or indoors when lightning approaches the work area.
- Visually inspect the road clearance and power separation before each job to ensure they are within code specifications.
- Assume all metal objects are energized until verified safe with a voltage detector or volt/ohm meter.
- Do not drive or walk through water of unknown depth.
- Do not approach electrical lines until a power company representative ensures the lines are de-energized.
- Watch for protruding nails and other sharp objects when walking through debris.
- Ensure the electrical rubber glove certification and voltage detector calibration is up-to-date.
- During high winds use a hand line to raise and lower the extension ladder onto the suspension strand.

"Safety is Accomplished One Job at a Time."

- Dean Chappell, CUSA
Utilities Division, Communications Section Chairman 1999-2000
Retired

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