



ANN ARBOR FIRE DEPARTMENT

Standard Operating Procedures - 3.17 Downed Power Line / Energized Electrical Equipment



DOWNTOWN POWER LINE / ENERGIZED ELECTRICAL EQUIPMENT

Effective: July 26, 2024
Scheduled Review: July 26, 2027
Approved: Fire Chief Mike Kennedy

I. PURPOSE

This procedure will establish a standard approach and response to the report of power lines down and other responses to energized electrical equipment. Power lines can come in contact with the ground as a result of storm related activity, fire, or vehicles striking power poles. In all cases, the potential for electrical shock/electrocution and secondary fire must be considered.

II. RESPONSE

- A. Single unit is the normal response to a report of any downed wires with no immediate threat.
- B. A report indicating that there is a possible fire involvement to a structure as a result of a downed power line should be upgraded to a still alarm assignment.
- C. A reported injury or casualty associated with the event; the unit responding may request additional units or resources.

III. ASSESSMENT

- A. Personnel will assess the scene to determine if the downed line is electrical or data / communications.
- B. If safe to do so, personnel may use a “Hot Stick” or thermal imager as part of their assessment process.

IV. RESPONSE TO POWER LINES DOWN

If the line is determined to be electrical

- A. The default notification process is for downed power lines to be submitted by the officer company via the online DTE reporting website. A link to the DTE online reporting system is on the home screen of all mobile computers. The department code is posted on each mobile computer. By company officers logging wires down, company and command officers can review all submitted requests along with estimated arrival times. This also frees up dispatcher bandwidth during storm events. <https://local.dteenergy.com/police-fire>
- B. For emergent incidents such as lines down on a building with the building on fire or lines down on occupied vehicles, the company officer can request Fire Dispatch to notify DTE.
- C. Personnel shall not attempt to move, cut, or touch downed electrical lines. Maintain 20’ of distance.
- D. Place apparatus away from down lines and power poles and out from under involved overhead lines that could fail and fall onto equipment or personnel.
- E. Stand-by considerations (tape and stay)
 - i. Across or near a road or sidewalk
 - ii. 300’ of school or park
 - iii. On or near a structure



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- iv. Never attach scene tape to downspouts on homes or chain link metal fence near the downed wire or energized wires on a structure.
- F. Notify surrounding occupancies or residences of the hazard.
 - i. If necessary, evacuate the occupancy or residence furthest away from hazard.
- G. In the event of multiple lines/poles down over a large area, call additional resources.
- H. Downed power lines can be left with any fire department or city employee, DTE, DTE contractor, law enforcement, or other public safety official. If a fire company is sitting on a power line and a structure fire or other significant incident is dispatched, the company shall check with the battalion chief for response. It shall be the battalion chief's decision to have that unit respond. If the battalion chief has that unit respond, then another company or unit will need to be requested to cover the downed line. Lines shall never be left without at minimum of being taped off with scene / caution tape.

V. AMI METERS

- A. For residential units with AMI meters, a company officer or incident commander can request EHP Fire Dispatch to have DTE remotely shut-off power. DTE will need the correct address or AMI meter number.
- B. AMI meter messages
 - i. CON OFF – successful disconnect
 - ii. CON LOAD – unsuccessful disconnect
 - iii. FAT ERROR 5 – meter unable to disconnect, energy still flowing
- C. Commercial buildings with AMI meters cannot be remotely disconnected.
- D. Per DTE direction, fire personnel will not pull meters.

VI. RESPONSE TO DATA or COMMUNICATIONS LINES

- A. Central Fire Dispatch will not notify data, cable, or telecommunications companies of downed lines due to a lack of 24/7 call center access.
- B. If data or communications are creating a public hazard such as blocking roadways, have Central Fire Dispatch notify DTE.
- C. If the data or communications lines are not creating a public hazard, follow below actions.
 - i. Attempt to tie off and secure the lines with caution tape.
 - ii. Notify surrounding occupancies or residences that these lines are not electrical, and they should contact their service providers for repair.

VII. DOWN POWER LINES AND VEHICLES

- A. Request Central Fire Dispatch to notify DTE.
- B. Do not touch vehicle.
- C. Have occupants remain inside the vehicle.
- D. Place apparatus a safe distance away from down lines.
If occupants must leave the vehicle (fire or other threat to life) instruct them to open the door, not step-out! They should jump free of the vehicle without touching vehicle and ground at the same time; they should move away with small, shuffle steps until 20' distant.



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VIII. TRANSFORMER, ELECTRICAL VAULT OR MANHOLE FIRE

- A. Request Central Fire Dispatch to notify DTE.
- B. Clear the area.
- C. Be aware of explosion potential.
- D. Place apparatus in a safe location away from overhead power lines and not over manhole covers.
- E. Protect exposures within 15'-30' of exposure.
- F. Do not make entry until the utility representative has verified that the above electrical equipment has been de-energized. The utility representative may have to make entry to uninvolved sections to safely de-energize the equipment.

IX. SUBSTATION FIRES

DTE is very clear that there is no property value to be saved in a sub-station. No risk shall be taken at a substation fire. **Never** enter a DTE Substation without a DTE escort.

- A. Request Central Fire Dispatch to notify DTE.
- B. The on-duty battalion chief shall immediately call the DTE emergency contact number for any fire within a substation.

If the fire department arrives to a DTE substation on fire or containing equipment on fire before the DTE escort arrives:

- A. Do not access the site.
- B. Do not cut the lock on the gate.
- C. Do not access the site, even if the gate is open or unlocked.
- D. Do not spray water, foam, dry chemical, or any other extinguishing agent on DTE substation equipment from inside or outside the fenced area until permitted by an onsite DTE representative.
- E. Efforts will be exclusively focused on exposures outside the fenced area of the substation.

X. RESPONSE TO POWER POLE FIRES

- A. Request Central Fire Dispatch to notify DTE.
- B. Place apparatus away from “down lines and power poles” and out from under involved overhead lines that could fail and fall onto equipment or personnel.
- C. Secure the area/deny entry.
- D. Do not make any fire attack until the utility representative has verified that the electrical equipment has been de-energized.

XI. DTE EMERGENT CONTACT

DTE Electric has a direct call number for use by the battalion chief, assistant chief, or fire chief for certain emergent electrical conditions. This number is in the battalion chief phone and AAFD phone list. The use of this direct number does not supersede the standard process for typical DTE requests. It should only be utilized if there is a significant risk to the public or firefighters, or if it meets the ETA requirements below. Non-emergent, typical calls for DTE assistance should be sent through normal means.



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The conditions which designate the need to utilize this emergent number include the following:

- A. Public contact: cut power to building, wires lying on structure, etc.
- B. Public trapped: primaries lying across major roadway, wires on occupied vehicle, etc.
- C. No ETA from DTE (when contacted through standard means) within thirty (30) minutes on a blue-sky day.
- D. No ETA from DTE (when contacted through standard means) within sixty (60) minutes on a storm day.
- E. If an emergent condition exists and it does not meet the above criteria and the incident commander or fire leadership believes immediate contact with DTE is required, then this direct call in line may be used in these rare instances.

For significant weather events, an assistant chief or the fire chief have access to an online portal to enter wire down incidents direct to DTE. When an incident is entered via this portal, units will not request Central Fire Dispatch to call DTE. This would create duplicate incidents in the DTE system.