

Winter Storm Safety Tips



Winter is upon us, bringing the promise of snow, ice and strong winds. As we brace for a cold and snowy season, the Electrical Safety Authority wants to ensure that you and your loved ones are prepared for potential electrical safety hazards, such as downed powerlines and flooding.

Severe and even fatal injuries can occur by touching or even being in close proximity to powerlines and electrical wires. The flow of electricity through the human body can burn, severely injure or kill. That leaves no room for mistakes – never put yourself in electricity’s path.

In the community:



- ✓ Downed powerlines may be live. Stay at least 35 feet or 11 meters away as electricity can travel through water and the ground around powerlines. Immediately report any downed wires to the local hydro company and call 911. Remain well back.
- ✓ Refrain from clearing snow, ice or storm debris until the power is disconnected or powerlines are repaired.
- ✓ If a powerline lands on your vehicle, remain in the vehicle until emergency responders arrive. Exiting a vehicle that has been contacted by a live powerline is extremely dangerous. Similarly, do not attempt to assist someone in a vehicle touched by powerlines.

Around your home:



- ✓ Heavy accumulation of snow and ice can bring trees and branches down onto powerlines causing blackouts and electrically charged hazards. Inspect the trees surrounding your property and call your local hydro company to trim branches away from overhead powerlines.
- ✓ Stay warm, cozy and safe. Do your research before buying portable heaters and electrical blankets and ensure they bear a [recognized certification mark](#).
- ✓ Melting snow and ice can contribute to flooding. Beware if water gets into your home as electrical systems may be affected. If you suspect damage to your electrical system, contact a licensed electrical contractor to make the repair.
- ✓ When flood water rises above electrical outlets or power cords or is near the service panel, it could be energized. Contact your local hydro company to disconnect the power immediately.

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- ✓ Do not plug in or attempt to use electrical appliances that have been wet until they have been checked by a licensed electrical contractor or serviced by the manufacturer.
- ✓ Portable generators, when used correctly, can provide security and comfort during power outages. Only use in dry, well ventilated areas and never connect portable generators to electrical appliances or wiring components that have been impacted by flood water.
- ✓ Portable generators can cause electrical hazards if connected or used incorrectly. Check the generator and all component parts to ensure that they have been approved by a recognized certification agency. Portable generators that are permanently installed into your electrical wiring are required to have a transfer device to protect your home and the utility system by preventing generator power from flowing back into the utility system.

For more information on electrical safety when stormy weather hits, visit:
http://www.powerlinesafety.info/stormy_weather.php.

The Electrical Safety Authority

The Electrical Safety Authority's (ESA) role is to enhance public electrical safety in Ontario. As a delegated administrative authority acting on behalf of the Government of Ontario, ESA is responsible for administering specific regulations related to the Ontario Electrical Safety Code, the licensing of Electrical Contractors and Master Electricians, electricity distribution system safety, and electrical product safety. ESA works extensively with stakeholders throughout the province on education, training and promotion to foster electrical safety across the province.