

# Emergency response near miss report



**Date of Incident:** Oct. 10, 2016 at 08:15  
**Type of incident:** Downed power line  
**Responder:** Law enforcement  
**Area of concern:** Risk of injury while moving a power line

## Points of concern

- Officer putting himself at risk moving downed power lines.
- Keeping yourself safe from potential high voltage electrical hazards.

## Incident summary

Early in the morning of October 10, a PSE service lineman was dispatched to an outage. About three-fourths of a mile into patrolling the line, he rounded a curve and came upon a law enforcement officer's SUV in the roadway. The light-bar was flashing and he noticed the officer outside the vehicle holding a high voltage power line in an attempt to move it out of the roadway. The wire he was holding was not phone or cable, but "tree-wire." Tree-wire is coated with just enough plastic to prevent a power outage if contacted by a branch. It does not protect against electrocution if handled. Furthermore, it is nearly impossible to distinguish from telephone or cable wire. The officer had no way of knowing whether this line was energized.

## Hazard assessment—best practices

- Assume all lines are energized or may re-energize at any moment.
- Contact PSE immediately upon encountering any downed power lines.
- Do not attempt to move lines or remove debris lying on or near them.
- Remain at least 30 feet away from downed power lines.



Power line in roadway



This is what an energized downed tree wire can do to turf.



"Tree-wire" (left) looks just like cable TV wire.