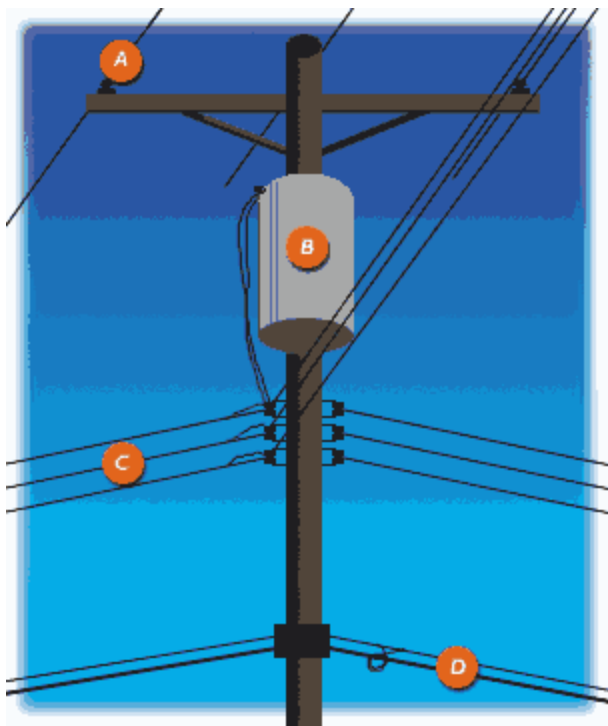


A POLICE OFFICER'S GUIDE TO IDENTIFYING DOWNED UTILITY LINES

Downed power lines can carry an electric current strong enough to cause serious injury or possibly death. High voltages also may be transmitted through materials other than power lines. A wooden pole, a kite, cable or other normally non-conducting material may carry an electrical current if it becomes wet or soiled. Always use caution around any downed lines – energized power lines look identical to non-energized ones. The only way to tell if a line is energized is with detection equipment. Electrical burns are nasty things; you do not want to find out the hard way! Don't drive over a downed line. Water conducts electricity! If a downed line is near water, keep a safe distance from the line and water, even if it is only a small puddle.

It is easy to tell power lines apart from these types of lines - power lines are always higher up on the pole, they always have insulators, and they do not touch other lines. Cable and telephone lines are located further down the pole and are directly attached to power poles without insulators. Electric lines carry high voltages and are always placed at the top of utility poles. Telephone lines and cable lines are placed lower on the poles. When a tree or branch falls, it will usually hit the electric wires first, causing a short circuit, which interrupts electricity while the other lines are undamaged. Also, phone and cable lines are generally thicker and operate at low voltages, which enable them to continue to operate when tree limbs come in contact with them, and, in some cases even when they are lying on the ground.



(A) Distribution Power Lines - generally are 23,000 volts – carry electricity from substations -- are located approximately 40 feet above ground.

(B) Transformers – reduce high voltage to secondary voltage, are located approximately 35 feet from the ground.

(C) Secondary Power Lines – generally are 120/240 volts – carry electricity to homes and businesses -- are located approximately 32 feet from the ground.

(D) Telephone/Cable Television Wires – generally about 20 feet from the ground.