

MEDIA RELEASE

Tuesday, 3 May, 2016

Beware fallen powerlines as strong winds hit Victoria

Energy Safe Victoria (ESV) is reminding Victorians to beware fallen powerlines as strong winds lash Victoria.

With wind gusts of up to 100 kilometres per hour forecast today, trees may be blown onto powerlines causing power cuts or potential safety issues if live powerlines fall to the ground.

ESV's Director of Energy Safety, Paul Fearon, said it was vital to stay well clear of fallen powerlines and to always assume any powerlines on the ground were live.

"You don't have to touch a powerline to be electrocuted," Mr Fearon said. "Even getting too close can be fatal. It is essential that you stay well clear and immediately report any fallen powerlines to your electricity distributor. Be particularly vigilant early in the morning or at night as fallen powerlines can be difficult to see."

Fallen trees can damage powerlines so it is possible some areas of the state may experience power outages today as the winds strengthen.

Mr Fearon said you can prepare for possible power outages by ensuring you have a torch, a charged mobile phone or landline that does not need electricity to operate, and access to important contact numbers including the faults number of your local power distributor, which is listed on power bills.

Mr Fearon said the distribution companies were prepared for increased demand today and would be working as quickly as possible to restore supply if outages occurred.

Victoria's distribution businesses can be contacted on the following numbers:

Powercor 132 412 (outer western suburbs and western Victoria)
CitiPower 131 280 (Melbourne CBD and inner suburbs)
Jemena 131 626 (northern and inner western suburbs)
United Energy 132 099 (inner eastern/south eastern suburbs, Mornington Peninsula)
SP AusNet 131799 (outer eastern and Eastern Victoria)

ADVICE FOR HOUSEHOLDS

- If supplies have not been restored to homes for any reason, householders must not connect generators or perform other electrical work. This is illegal and dangerous. It can only be carried out by licensed electricians.
- Households still without power after electricity has been restored to their neighbourhood should seek the help of their network provider. The problem could be a fault in the supply line to the property, or a fault within the property's electrical installation.
- If there are continuing power supply problems within properties, a licensed electrician must be engaged to perform any electrical repair work. Contact a registered electrical contractor in your local area.

For further information:

Sharon Rainsbury, Energy Safe Victoria, Phone: 9203 9744 or 0427 990 834 or
srainsbury@esv.vic.gov.au