

Emergency Procedure

What to do if your aircraft comes into contact with an overhead line:

- Assume the line / wires are alive, even if they are not sparking.
- Remember that, even if they are dead, the wires can become alive again with no notice. This may happen automatically after a few seconds, or may be re-energised remotely up to several hours later if SSEPD is not aware that the line has been damaged.
- If you can, use your mobile telephone to call the emergency services. Give them your location as accurately as you can. Tell them that there are electricity wires involved and ask them to inform SSEPD.
- If your aircraft is in contact with an electricity wire or within five metres of a damaged overhead wire then stay inside your aircraft until the emergency services or SSEPD arrive unless there is a real threat of fire.
- Once a wire is on the ground you do not have to touch it to be killed. The current may travel a significant distance through the ground and even further if the wire has fallen on a fence or other metallic objects. Keep well clear.
- If you have to get out, then try and jump clear rather than stepping off the aircraft. Then move rapidly at least 10 metres away.
- The emergency services have been briefed on how to undertake rescues in proximity of damaged overhead lines. An SSEPD engineer will confirm when the power has been turned off and the rescue can proceed safely.
- If suspended from, or tangled in, wires do not allow others to approach until it is confirmed safe to do so by SSEPD.

Emergency Contact

In an emergency, call the appropriate number below:

North of Scotland 0800 300 999

Central Southern England 08000 72 72 82

SSE Power Distribution Ltd
Inveralmond House
200 Dunkeld Road
Perth PH1 3AQ

Web: www.ssepd.co.uk
Registered in Scotland 213459

Stock Code 007625

SAFETY INFORMATION FOR AVIATORS

Light Aircraft Helicopters
Microlights Gliders Hang gliders
Paragliders Hot Air Ballons

Keep safe from
Electricity Overhead Lines



 Scottish and Southern
Energy
Power Distribution

Introduction

There are electricity overhead lines criss-crossing the countryside. Often unnoticed, they are essential to provide electricity to the cities, towns, villages and rural communities. The overhead lines carry voltages ranging from 230 volts (domestic voltage) up to 400,000 volts. Even domestic voltages can be fatal, and high voltage electricity can jump large gaps.

This leaflet provides a basic guide to maximise your chances of remaining safe when:

- taking off;
- flying at low level;
- landing; or making a forced landing; or
- in the vicinity of electricity overhead power lines.

This information should be used in conjunction with CAA guidance and your club / company procedures.

Some general key points

- Electricity systems carry voltages up to 400,000 volts. Even 230 volts (domestic voltage) can be lethal.
- Never assume that electrical equipment is dead, even if the wires have fallen or broken.
- Remember that the power can be switched back on at any time, without warning.
- Touching electricity wires or objects / persons in contact with the wires can be fatal.
- Even the lowest voltage overhead lines can produce 10,000 times more current than is required to kill a person.
- Electricity can jump gaps.
- Trees, string, ropes, suspension lines and water can conduct electricity.
- Rubber boots will not protect you.
- Most electricity wires are not insulated.

Before you take off:

- Make sure you know where overhead lines are in the vicinity of your departure airfield.
- The CAA 1:250,000 map shows the major transmission lines, because of their height but does not show other high and low voltage overhead lines - notably those on wood poles which are more difficult to see from the air.
- Check carefully in the airstrip guides e.g. Pooleys for notes about overhead lines near your destination airfield.
- Try and find out as much as possible about a new destination airfield including any power lines in proximity or in the area. Consider driving there first to personally inspect it.
- Always carry a mobile telephone when you fly, to call the emergency services if you have to land in an emergency.
- Good eyesight improves the chances of you spotting power lines. Do you need an eye test?

During your flight:

- If you are practising low flying, keep a special lookout for overhead lines.
- Regularly refer to your CAA 1:250,000 map looking for electricity transmission lines in your vicinity.

Final approach and landing out:

- Remember that overhead lines can be very difficult to see from the air. Look for a row of supporting poles or pylons to indicate the route.
- Poles could be hidden behind trees and a 'tee off' line may come away at right angles across your intended landing field.
- If you are unfortunate to have an engine failure, amongst all the other things that will occupy you e.g. field size, shape, slope, surface, etc., look out for overhead lines on your final approach and within your chosen field.

Additional Information for Gliding

Each year the member clubs of the British Gliding Association and British Hang Gliding and Paragliding Association provide around 400,000 winch / auto tow launches, almost all accomplished without incident. However, there have been incidents where the launching cable has come into contact with overhead power lines either as a result of the launching cable drifting across the power line after release or being dropped by the glider after a launch cable break.

Such incidents expose aviators and the public to a serious risk of electrocution and the interruption of electricity supplies to large areas.

General Guidance:

- Display a map showing electricity lines near the airfield or site on your notice board, site guide or in your briefing room.
- Include SSE Power Distribution's (SSEPD) emergency telephone number (see back cover) on the notice board, site guide and in your list of telephone contacts.
- Do not rig or de-rig within 10 metres of an overhead line as long objects, battens spars etc. could contact the line.

Winch and Aerotow operations:

- Position the winch and launch point to minimise launch cable drift.
- Use an appropriately sized cable drogue parachute to minimise drift.
- Consider earthing the winch.
- If a cable should fall across an overhead line, evacuate everyone in the vicinity of the cable and winch, then inform SSEPD urgently, giving a precise location.
- Never attempt to go near or recover a cable that is in contact with an overhead line.
- Carefully select tug aircraft landing approaches to avoid a towline catching a power line.