

NORTHEAST PUBLIC POWER ASSOCIATION

Procedures for Work-Related Accidents

A checklist of suggested actions to be taken in the event of a work-related electric utility accidents involving one or more employees requiring medical treatment



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Purpose

These procedures have been developed to provide NEPPA member utilities with a checklist of suggested actions to be taken in the event of a work-related accident involving one or more of their employees requiring medical treatment. Some utilities have already developed formal procedures for this purpose, and this document is not intended to replace individual company procedures already in place. NEPPA members without their own written procedures are encouraged to utilize this checklist in order to develop their own procedures, and to make them known to all of their employees.

1. Procedures for Crew at Accident Scene

1. If an employee or employees are incapacitated as a result of the accident, other crew members at the scene should notify dispatcher (or other designated person) of the accident as soon as possible, using available mobile radio or other devices. *(If a mobile radio system is utilized, the common signal to broadcast an emergency injury condition is CODE BLUE. Only CODE BLUE-related communications should be allowed on the radio system during the emergency. Crew should not give name of injured employee(s) over the radio).* In addition to communication with dispatcher, notification of public safety departments through the standard 911 telephone number should be made.
2. Crew should request emergency assistance deemed necessary: ambulance; fire; or other utility personnel.
3. Detailed location information should be provided to dispatcher if possible, including town, street address and/or intersection, landmarks, pole or vault number, truck number, etc.

4. Injury information should be provided to dispatcher which includes nature of injury (burn, break, conscious, unconscious, breathing, not breathing, etc.)
5. Location of injured employee(s) should be provided, such as ground, pole, bucket, manhole, etc.
6. Crew should secure the accident scene and take corrective action to prevent additional injuries. If deemed necessary for crew and public safety, and after consultation with department management, be prepared to de-energize area.
7. Crew shall undertake appropriate rescue and first aid procedures as may be necessary: pole top, bucket rescue, first aid, CPR. Crew shall stay with injured employee(s) and monitor their condition.
8. Upon arrival of EMTs/paramedics at the accident scene, provide as much information as possible (body parts involved, voltage, duration of shock, loss of consciousness, age, etc.).
9. If possible, a crew member should accompany injured employee(s) during ambulance trip to medical facility.

2. Procedures for Dispatcher or Emergency Communications Center

1. Upon receipt of CODE BLUE communication, Dispatcher should confirm CODE BLUE emergency and repeat the location, nature of injuries and truck number with on-site crew member.
2. If not already called by crew on scene, Dispatcher should initiate emergency response by calling 911 and reporting the accident, providing location details, injury type, condition of injured parties, and whether a rescue is necessary.
3. Dispatcher should notify utility supervisory personnel of the accident, with details on location, personnel at scene, status of situation, etc.

3. Management Responsibilities

1. Crew Supervisor should assign crews to aid in rescue if necessary.
2. Supervisor should notify local police, fire, EMTs, public works, or other agencies, if not already done and if deemed necessary.
3. Supervisor should proceed to accident site, assess site conditions, take corrective actions as necessary, brief emergency personnel regarding injury victims as appropriate.
4. Management should institute a “safety stand down” if deemed necessary, requiring all crews to report back to the utility unless they are needed elsewhere. Management should notify department employees of accident, and provide general information about the condition of injured employee(s). *(Note: Information made public about injured employees should be non-specific because of privacy issues).*
5. Department Manager (or designee) should notify injured employee’(s) family (spouse/parents) in person as soon as possible, and, if requested, provide transportation to the medical facility where employee is being treated. Manager or designee should go to medical facility where injured employee is being transported to assist with admission if necessary and to meet the employee’s family on their arrival.
6. Manager or designee should take necessary steps to provide care and transportation for injured employee’(s) children as may be necessary.
7. If necessary, Manager should make appropriate arrangements with Board of Commissioners and municipal officials for the payment of expenses related to the care and transportation of the employee’(s) family members during the immediate aftermath of the accident.
8. Manager should notify Department’s attorney of accident.
9. Manager or designee is responsible for the reporting of the accident, and completion of all necessary forms or documentation as may be requested; typically, accident reports are required by the following agencies:
 - State Department or Division of Occupational Safety, Labor Standards, etc.
 - Health Insurance Company of accident victim(s)

- Worker's Compensation Insurance Company
 - Retirement Board (in the event of a potential long-term disability)
9. Manager or designee is responsible for responding to all press, media or public inquiries regarding the accident and injured employee(s). Employees should direct all such inquiries to manager or designee.
10. The Manger should initiate the process of investigating the accident. Photographs of the accident scene should be taken from as many different angles as possible. The scene should be photographed as soon as possible after the accident scene is cleared and the injured employee(s) have been treated or otherwise taken care of. The photographs should also be taken before any vehicles, tools or other equipment are moved.

4. Accident Investigation

It is the responsibility of utility management (Commissioners and management staff) to assure that a complete investigation of the accident is performed. The goal of the investigation is to determine the cause(s) of the accident and to develop measures that may be taken to avoid future accidents of a similar nature. *(It should be noted that accident investigations require a good amount of time to be completed and to have reports prepared - usually several weeks at least. This process should not be rushed).*

In order to fulfill their responsibility for accident investigation, utility management may conduct their own investigation, or may request assistance from other parties. In all cases, management should keep their Department's attorney informed of the activities being performed by them or on their behalf.

For utilities that participate in the Northeast Public Power Association (NEPPA) safety training programs, the NEPPA Safety Director can be made available to assist in the accident investigation through a site visit and interviews with utility staff members. Based on this information, he can report to system management on the possible causes of the accident, and any safety rules, industry standards or procedures which appear not to have been followed and which may have contributed to the accident. If requested to provide this assistance, the NEPPA

Safety Director will meet with the utility manager and the Department's attorney and provide a verbal report before creating a written record of his findings.

(Note: It is important to note that participation in an accident investigation by the NEPPA Safety Director will not result in a comprehensive analysis of all possible factors contributing to the accident. Nor should his report to management be considered a definitive statement of facts for purposes of potential litigation or insurance claims. It is rather to provide assistance to system managers in gaining a better understanding of the nature and causes of the accident, and to identify potential issues related to workplace procedures that may require stronger management oversight, employee training, etc. NEPPA strongly recommends that any member system that seeks to have a comprehensive report of a workplace accident and potential contributing factors should secure the services of professional industry consultants and legal counsel).

5. Post-Accident Activities

In the immediate aftermath of an accident in a member system, especially one involving serious employee injuries, the NEPPA Safety Director (or other designated safety staff trainers) can be requested to meet with system employees and provide support and assistance as may be necessary. In addition, special safety classes focusing on the accident and its causes may be scheduled at the request of system management. Finally, NEPPA staff can also be made available to assist other parties involved with accident follow-up activities (state or local officials, insurance claims adjusters, legal and professional investigators, etc.) at the request of system management.

In the event of a fatal accident, it is strongly recommended that the utility utilize the services of a professional employee assistance program (EAP) to provide emotional support and to be available for grief counseling to department employees.

6. Key Contacts

Each system should maintain a list of key individuals or organizations (with phone numbers) to contact in the event of an accident. This list should be reviewed and updated periodically to assure its accuracy. Suggested contacts on this list include the following:

- Local Police Department(s)
- Local Fire and Rescue Department(s)
- Local EMT or Ambulance Services (if not provided by Fire Department)
- Other Municipal Light Department Managers willing to assist in the event of management absence during emergencies
- Local / Regional Medical Flight Services
- Local / Regional Hospital Emergency Services
- Department Attorney
- State Department or Division of Occupational Safety
- Health Insurance Company of accident victim(s)
- Worker's Compensation Insurance Company
- Retirement Board (in the event of potential long-term disability)

7. Emergency Notification List

Each system should also maintain an up-to-date list of family members or other contact persons for each employee to be notified in the event of an accident. Telephone numbers (home, work, cell) should be available for each person on the list and should be reviewed and updated periodically to assure that emergency notification can be made in a timely manner following an accident. Employees should also be asked to provide the names and phone numbers of any family members or friends who can provide emergency child care in the event of an accident.