

Consumers Energy Offers ‘Above and Below’ Summer Safety Tips

The Official Start of Summer Means More Outdoor Activities, Awareness

JACKSON, Mich., June 22, 2017 – Consumers Energy today reminded the public to be extra cautious when working or playing outside, now that summer has officially begun.

“The safety of our customers, communities, employees and the general public has always been the top priority for Consumers Energy,” said Aaron Kantor, the company’s director of emergency management and public safety. “Whether people are looking up to perform chores on a ladder, catching wind to fly a kite or hoist a sail, or have their sights set on the ground as they excavate for a garden project, Consumers Energy wants everyone to know the potential hazards and stay safe as they participate in summer activities.”

He advised residents to always “look up and look out” for overhead electric lines when participating in outdoor activities. “Always assume a power line is energized and therefore dangerous. Stay away from them, and teach children to stay away, too,” Kantor said.

Consumers Energy reminded the public that it is important to look for and avoid power lines when you:

- Move a ladder or clean gutters
- Work on top of a building
- Install an antenna or satellite dish
- Trim trees, complete outside painting projects, move a sailboat or clean a pool with metal handle tools.

Safety standards require that anyone working near power lines stay at least 10 feet away, which includes any tools or equipment being used. Metal ladders, cranes and other specialized equipment require 20 feet of clearance. If a project requires you or your equipment to be

Media toolkit

MORE SAFETY INFORMATION:

www.ConsumersEnergy.com/safety

SAFETY INFORMATION FOR KIDS:

www.ConsumersEnergy.com/kids

CALL BEFORE YOU DIG:

At least three working days before digging, call 811 or visit www.MISSDIG811.org to complete a free underground utility staking request.

positioned within the minimum safety distances, contact Consumers Energy at 800-477-5050 so other safe arrangements can be made, such as de-energizing the power line.

Kantor offered these “Look Up” summer safety tips:

- Never climb trees near overhead power lines or allow children to play near electrical equipment, and stay away from a tree that has power lines running through it. If a tree branch breaks and lands on an electric line, do not touch the branch or wire; and
- Do not fly kites, model airplanes or radio-controlled devices near electric lines, transformers, substations and radio antennas. These items can cause an injury, power outage or fire if they become tangled in power lines. Do not try to remove anything from power lines

Before undertaking digging or garden projects like planting bushes and trees or installing decks and fences, Kantor advised residents to “Know What’s Below.” Other safe digging tips include:

- Contact MISS DIG 811 by calling 811 or online at MISSDIG811.org at least three working days in advance of digging to have underground utilities, including electric wires and natural gas lines, safely marked by flags or paint to avoid dangerous damage. This is a free service;
- Confirm all underground facilities have been marked before you dig by checking Positive Response by calling 811 or visiting response.missdig811.org;
- Once you are sure underground lines have been marked, respect the marks, hand expose to verify their location and dig with care; and
- Teach children to leave the colored staking flags in the ground so safe digging can occur.

In addition, Kantor reminds contractors of additional safety measures to ensure they’re kept safe while working around overhead power lines:

- Always complete a pre-job safety briefing to ensure safety concerns are identified and mitigated;
- Survey your job site every day to find overhead power lines, poles, and wires, and point them out to co-workers; and
- Review your emergency plan before work begins, so everyone knows what to do in case of power line contact.

Consumers Energy, Michigan's largest utility, is the principal subsidiary of CMS Energy (NYSE: CMS), providing natural gas and electricity to 6.7 million of the state's 10 million residents in all 68 Lower Peninsula counties.

###

Media Contacts: Roger Morgenstern, 616-530-4364 or Terry DeDoes, 517-374-2159

For more information about Consumers Energy, go to www.ConsumersEnergy.com.

Check out Consumers Energy on Social Media

