



## NEWS RELEASE

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### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

#### **Allegheny Power Recognizes National Electric Safety Month**

**Greensburg, Pa., May 6, 2005** – May is National Electric Safety Month, and Allegheny Power would like to take this opportunity to remind its customers that although electricity is a great convenience, it can also be dangerous and must be treated with respect. Accidents involving contact with power lines and energized equipment occur every year. More often than not, these accidents result in serious injury or even death.

Statistics from the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) show that each year, approximately 180 people are electrocuted in the home and nearly 300 are electrocuted at the worksite. In an effort to prevent these accidents, federal and state governments have enacted laws to provide safer working conditions in areas around high voltage power lines. These laws generally make it illegal for an individual to work closer than 10 feet to, or to allow any tool or other object within 10 feet of, an overhead power line or energized piece of equipment.

“Electrical safety is always first on Allegheny Power’s priority list,” said Joseph H. Richardson, President, Allegheny Power. “We believe that all accidents can be prevented. We hope that by making consumers and contractors aware of the importance of respecting electricity, and using electrical equipment safely, that we can reduce the number of accidents and injuries that occur.”

Contractors must remember to exercise caution when working around electricity, as well. According to the Electrical Safety Foundation International (ESFI), power lines are the single greatest “on-the-job” electrical hazard, killing an average of 133 workers per year.

While power lines may have a covering to protect against weather, they are not insulated for contact. The best insulator to protect against a fatality or injury is to maintain a safe distance from energized electrical equipment.

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### **Outdoor Safety Tips**

The following are a few precautions customers can follow when working or playing around electricity outdoors:

- Never touch a fallen wire or any object that is in contact with one. Always assume that a fallen wire is energized and keep clear of it.
- Keep ladders – especially metal ones – away from electrical lines at all times. Pay particular attention when moving an extension ladder to ensure it does not come into contact with any power lines.
- Never climb a tree that has power lines running through it or near it. In addition, never climb poles or fences surrounding substations or other electrical devices – the equipment inside can be charged with thousands of kilowatts of electricity.
- When carrying an antenna – or any object such as a metal pipe or gutter – keep it away from power lines. When installing or repairing an antenna, make certain it never comes in contact with electric lines.
- Electricity and water do not mix. Keep power tools, radios, appliances, electric lawn mowers and other lawn tools away from swimming pools, sprinklers, garden hoses and wet grass. Never operate electric tools in the rain.

### **Contractor Safety Tips**

The following safety tips will help contractors prevent accidental contact with overhead and underground power lines; however, the most important element of accident prevention is to make safety the number one priority:

- Always look for electric power lines before beginning any type of construction work. Pre-job planning is a major factor in preventing accidents.
- Call Allegheny Power at 1-800-Allegheny (1-800-255-3443) for a safety survey if power lines are located near your worksite. Contact your local “One-Call” call center at least three days before beginning a project that requires excavation to avoid digging into an underground line. For a listing of the call centers located in our service territory, visit our web site at [www.alleghenypower.com](http://www.alleghenypower.com).
- Never work closer than 10 feet from an energized overhead power line. Unless Allegheny Power has ensured the safety of the line, it is good practice to stay at least 25 feet away.
- Lower booms, truck beds and other construction equipment before passing under electric lines.
- Never touch a fallen wire or any object that is in contact with one. Always assume that a fallen wire is energized and keep clear of it. In addition, make sure all workers on the job site are aware of the hazards of power line contacts.

### **Indoor Safety Tips**

The following are a few precautions customers can follow when working or playing around electricity indoors:

- Never use an electrical appliance near water, when your hands are wet or when you are working around wet areas. Use and store appliances away from the sink, bathtub and shower. Keep hair dryers, curling irons and similar devices away from water.
- Inspect appliance cords periodically and replace if frayed or damaged. If you need an extension cord, use a heavy-duty cord and make sure it is in good condition. Always connect appliances to a grounded wall outlet and not to a light fixture. Disconnect appliances by grasping the plug – never by pulling on the cord.
- Before cleaning or repairing any appliance, be sure it is disconnected or the circuit is turned off. Never use an appliance that is sparking, making unusual noises or not operating properly.
- Inspect power tools often and make sure their electrical cords are free of defects. Store power tools in a dry area – dampness can damage tools and create a shock hazard when they are used. Never use power tools around wet areas or when standing on a wet surface.
- Never insert anything into an electrical outlet except the plug of an appliance. To protect small children, “dummy” plugs can be installed in unused outlets. In addition, never leave light bulb sockets empty. If a bulb burns out, leave it in the socket until it can be replaced.

For more information about electrical safety, call 1-800-Allegheny (1-800-255-3443) and request a copy of our “Electrical Safety: Outdoors & Indoors” brochure, or visit our web site at [www.alleghenypower.com](http://www.alleghenypower.com). For more information about electrical safety at the worksite, contractors can request a copy of our “Electrical Safety: Above Ground ... and Underground” brochure.

### **Allegheny Energy**

Headquartered in Greensburg, Pa., Allegheny Energy is an investor-owned utility consisting of two major businesses. Allegheny Energy Supply owns and operates electric generating facilities, and Allegheny Power delivers low-cost, reliable electric service to customers in Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Maryland, Virginia and Ohio. For more information, visit our Web site at [www.alleghenyenergy.com](http://www.alleghenyenergy.com).

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