

Storms and Flood Hazards

Storms and floods can create both gas and electric hazards. In an emergency, be ready to take the following steps. OPU wants its customers to be informed about the most common gas and electric hazards caused by storms and natural disasters, and to show you how to prevent injuries and stay safe.

Flood Hazards

- If your home is flooded, don't touch appliances while the power is still on. Turn off the electricity at the main circuit box, but first be sure you are not wet or standing in water.
- When the flood water subsides have all electrical panels, fixtures, outlets, appliances, and other devices checked out by an electrician prior to reenergizing the flooded area. The flood waters may have damaged the equipment and may pose an electrical and/or fire hazard.
- If you smell an odor of gas (rotten eggs) inside your home, leave it immediately without turning lights or other electrical equipment on/off and then call OPU at 507-451-1616 from an outside phone.
- To turn off leaking gas, use the main shut-off valve on the inlet pipe next to your gas meter. With a wrench or other suitable tool, give the valve a quarter turn in either direction so that it is crosswise to the pipe. If you have trouble, call OPU at 507-451-1616 for help.
- Once the gas is shut off at the meter, do not try to turn it back on. Only a qualified person should turn the gas back on. Call OPU at 507-451-1616 to restore service.

Electrical Storm Precautions

The human body is 70 percent water, which makes it an excellent conductor of electricity. Lightning always seeks out the tallest objects in a given area and if that object is you, you could be shocked, burned or electrocuted. If you are outside in an electrical storm:

- Seek shelter, get inside the nearest house, building or vehicle. If you can't get inside, stay low--sit or lie down. Being wet or uncomfortable is better than being struck by lightning.
- Do not stand under a tree. Trees attract lightning which can cause them to split, fall, explode or shock you if you are touching one. If you are on a golf course, drop all metal clubs, get in a golf cart, and seek a safe shelter.
- If you are swimming, get out of the water and seek shelter.
- If you are in a boat, get to shore and seek shelter. Stay clear of metal masts and rigging.
- Stay away from fences, electrical towers or other metal objects that can conduct electricity.

Downed or Damaged Power Lines

Is it an electric line? Telephone? Cable TV? Don't guess. Assume every downed line is an energized electric line. Warn your family members, especially children, never to touch wires lying on the ground or hanging from poles. Downed wires still may be carrying current. Winds can whip these lines around, making them extremely dangerous, stay a safe distance away. Do not attempt to free anyone or anything in contact with a power line. Call 911 for emergency help or OPU at 507-451-1616.

- If a live line is touching your vehicle, stay in the vehicle and wait for help to arrive. If the vehicle catches fire or if you must get out, jump clear without touching the ground and the vehicle at the same time. Shuffle away--don't walk or run.
- Stay clear of puddles, fences, trees or any other object in contact with a power line. Remember, metal is not the only conductor of electricity.

- Stay away from leaning power poles and towers or sagging power lines. Call OPU at 507-451-1616 immediately.

Storm Preparedness

Keep a Storm Preparedness kit, including:

- Bottled water
- Non-perishable food
- Flashlights and batteries
- Battery-operated radio
- Candles and matches
- A minimum two-week supply of needed medications.
- A phone that does not require electricity (cordless phones do not work without electricity).
- First aid kit
- Manual can opener