

## **Downed Lines/Towers**

### **What are the hazards from downed power lines and towers?**

Instances of downed high voltage power lines and towers are particularly rare, especially when compared with distribution and low voltage lines. RMP, as an electrical energy supplier, operates under requirements that all high voltage transmission and distribution equipment, as well as lines, must be covered by a protective relaying system appropriate for the associated equipment. These protective relays sense the presence of system faults (shorts circuits) and open circuit breakers to de-energize lines and equipment. This is to protect not only the electrical equipment such as wires and transformers, but to ensure that these electrical faults are cleared quickly enough to maintain the stability of the electrical grid and provide for public safety. The circuit breakers on the utility system act like the circuit breakers inside your home. They trip when a short circuit happens to protect your home and the people inside it from injury. In the case of 500kV and 345kV line faults, the relaying scheme operates very quickly and de-energizes the lines within a fraction of a second.

Downed power lines and towers obviously represent a severe electrocution hazard. Rocky Mountain Power diligently strives to educate the public as to the hazards of downed power lines. Put simply, in the event of a downed line, the public should, first avoid the area, second contact Emergency Services and/or RMP. RMP maintains highly qualified staff and contractors. They are immediately dispatched to downed lines to assess the damage and begin the repair process.