

Electrical Safety During the Hurricane Season

The 2011 Atlantic Hurricane Season is here and predictions are for another active season. In today's column we highlight some of the things to be aware of to ensure electrical safety during the hurricane season.

BEFORE THE STORM

- Contact LUCELEC before trimming or cutting down trees that are near overhead electricity lines. Watch out for power lines before you begin working on a ladder. Be sure that ladders or scaffolds are far enough away so that you, and the ends of the tools you're using, don't come within 10 feet of power lines. And never use any electrical appliance in wet surroundings outdoors or in the rain.
- Have flashlights, battery-powered radios and extra fresh batteries available. Severe weather may result in power outages as a result of damaged infrastructure or in the event that the power system is shut down for safety reasons.

DURING THE STORM

- In a thunderstorm, unplug all electrical appliances and equipment. It is not sufficient to just switch them off. Lightning can produce high voltages on electrical networks, which can damage equipment.
- During severe weather, if your roof or windows leak, water in your walls and ceiling may come into contact with electrical wiring. Immediately turn off your main switch followed by circuit breakers. Disconnect all electrical appliances that are still plugged in, and turn off all wall switches. Remember, never stand in water while operating switches or unplugging any electrical device.
- Turn off your electricity at the main switch if you have to evacuate, if you expect flood water to approach your home, or if your home is flooded.

AFTER THE STORM

- During or immediately after a storm, don't venture out in the dark because you may not see downed power lines that could be energized and dangerous. Stay away from low-hanging or downed power lines. Treat all downed power lines as if they are energized.
- Report outages, any low-hanging or downed power lines by calling LUCELEC's Trouble Call Department. Residents in the North should call 452-2165, and those in the South should call 454-6617. Please provide your name, telephone number and precise address, as well as the location of the fault. If the electricity pole nearest you has a number on it, please provide that number as well.
- After power is restored switch on appliances one at a time. This causes less stress to the power system and ensures that all customers get restored without unnecessary delays.
- If your building was flooded and water rose above the electrical outlets, contact a licensed electrician before turning on the main circuit breaker. Any appliances or equipment that may have been submerged will need to be thoroughly dried and checked by a qualified repair person prior to being turned on.
- If someone has touched a fallen power line, stay away unless you have been trained to deal with the

situation safely. Call emergency services as unskilled efforts to rescue the victim could be fatal. If a live power line hits your car, stay inside. It is the safest place. If you must leave, jump clear of the car without touching the car's body and the ground at the same time.

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