



LAW ENFORCEMENT BULLETIN



DOWNED WIRES: ESSENTIAL NEW POLICY & TRAINING CONSIDERATIONS

Downed and energized wires create an immediate and potentially fatal hazard for responding officers. In April 2024, in Hendricks County, Indiana, a Deputy died after reportedly contacting downed power lines while responding to a crash involving a utility pole, and two New Jersey Police Officers were injured in 2026 by downed power lines.¹⁻² These incidents underscore the need for clear policy, practical training, and strict scene control.

Chiefs of Police should review the [New Jersey PEOSH Emergency Safety Bulletin: Response Procedures for Downed Electrical Lines](#), applicable to all New Jersey Law Enforcement Officers, and utilize this bulletin and the available sample policy to ensure officers are prepared, trained, and provided with proper policy guidance.

Recommended Action for Chiefs of Police

Review the new *Downed Wire and Response Safety Sample Policy*, available in the MSI [Law Enforcement Accreditation Plus Portal](#).

Implement the policy or update the agency policy to ensure it provides strong guidance on downed, low-hanging, damaged, unidentified, or storm-related wire incidents.

The available sample policy includes specific provisions that are imperative to help keep officers safe, including but not limited to:

- Assessing the scene from a safe location.
- Looking for wires, damaged poles, transformers, arcing, smoke, water, metal objects, victims, and energized vehicles or structures.
- Not touching, moving, cutting, lifting, dragging, driving over, or using any object to manipulate a wire.
- Establishing a restricted area and keeping officers, pedestrians, motorists, bicyclists, and other responders out.
- Notifying the utility authority and requesting fire, EMS, public works, or additional police resources when needed.
- Maintaining scene security until relieved or until the utility authority addresses the hazard.
- Initial and ongoing training standards.
- Near Miss and After-Action reporting and review.

If you have any questions, contact your Law Enforcement Risk Control Consultant, or if you need assistance in accessing the Law Enforcement Accreditation Plus Portal, contact the Law Enforcement Team at lawenforcementteam@jamontgomery.com

Resources:

¹[Police Magazine. \(2024, April 16\). Indiana Deputy Killed by Downed Power Line. Retrieved from Police Magazine:](#)

²The State of New Jersey. (2026). *PEOSH Emergency Safety Bulletin - Response Procedures Concerning Downed Electrical Lines*. Trenton, N.J.: New Jersey PEOSH.