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Keep clear of emergency crews in the cold

Essential Energy is asking motorists to remain vigilant around emergency response crews repairing the electricity network in challenging working conditions during winter.

General Manager Safety, HR and Environment, David Nardi, said Essential Energy operates across 95 per cent of NSW and can have teams working across difficult alpine terrain and near icy or wet roads in the cooler months.

“The nature of unplanned outages means Essential Energy crews can find themselves working in freezing conditions, on frost-laden or wet ground, and potentially near roads,” David said.

“Motorists travelling near worksites in cold weather should exercise extreme caution. Fog, snow and icy conditions can add risks for crews working in these areas and for drivers themselves.”

Essential Energy crews wear high visibility clothing, operate fog and hazard lights in poor weather conditions, and always display safety signage.

Where possible, motorists are encouraged to plan a route that avoids areas where repairs to the electrical network are being undertaken or to allocate extra travel time to get to their destination.

Electrical infrastructure is designed for climatic conditions, however, ice build-up on powerlines can cause sagging or breakage in extreme cold.

If you identify damaged electricity infrastructure, contact Essential Energy immediately on 13 20 80, treat fallen powerlines and anything in contact with them as ‘live’, and remain at least eight metres clear.

Essential Energy also recommends keeping an emergency safety kit handy in case of power outages during the cold weather. Suggested items include:

- A flashlight with a supply of batteries
- Candles and waterproof matches
- A portable radio with spare batteries to keep you informed of the situation
- Non-perishable food, a can opener, and fresh drinking water
- Spare warm dry clothing and blankets
- A first aid kit and essential medications; and
- A list of emergency contact numbers, including Essential Energy’s 13 20 80 Supply Interruptions number.

For more information on electrical safety, visit: www.essentialenergy.com.au/safety or call Essential Energy on **13 23 91**.

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Essential Energy is the operator of one of Australia’s largest electricity networks spanning 95 per cent of New South Wales’ land mass. Owned by the New South Wales Government, Essential Energy also provides water and sewerage services to customers in far western New South Wales.