

News Release

Launch of first national electrical awareness video for emergency responders

Calgary, AB – April 28, 2011 – Police, fire and ambulance personnel are usually the first people on the scene of an emergency. When power lines are involved, these emergency responders are often unaware of the danger and put themselves at risk of serious injury or death.

The Canadian Electricity Association (CEA), the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) and CEA corporate utility members – including Alberta’s FortisAlberta and AltaLink – took the initiative to produce Canada’s first electrical safety training video which is now available to all emergency responders across the nation.

“I have seen many close calls with Alberta’s police, fire and ambulance workers where they weren’t aware of the hazards of a downed power line at the scene. That is why we were passionate about raising the level of awareness with Canadian responders,” says Doug Skippen, FortisAlberta’s Manager of Health and Safety.

The 15-minute video was filmed in central Alberta and covers six scenarios that make up the principal contacts made by first responders with energized high voltage power lines and equipment in Canada. One: the cautionary measure to use when responding to vehicle collisions involving power lines and poles. Two and three: the electrical hazards involved when construction vehicles and farming equipment are in contact with power lines. Four: the hazards that may be present when responding to a call involving electric utility substations. Five: responding to downed power lines involving trees. Six: the potential hazard present when responding to underground power line contacts.

Key points in the video include the importance of performing a scene survey and assessing the hazards, taking control, treating the power line as energized, staying/keeping others 10 metres away and contacting the electric utility’s emergency personnel.

Across Canada, the training video is available free of charge from local CEA member utilities. It is called, ‘Electricity... The Invisible Killer.’ Interested parties are asked to contact their electricity service providers should they wish to receive a copy. Alberta’s utility contacts are available on the DVD website at www.electricity.ca/theinvisiblekiller.

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