

Tips for a safe fall season at home

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Fall season brings on the return of pumpkin spice-everything while the leaves change across the Pacific Northwest. Many of us consider fall the start of the holiday season. And the holidays often bring an increase in outdoor activity, whether it be from trick-or-treaters skipping up the porch steps or relatives stopping by for a Thanksgiving dinner. That's why we should take extra care and precaution when maintaining the structures and landscaping around our home.

"Now is a great time to prune any trees that could cause trouble once the storms start coming in," said Joe Cissna, Pacific Power's health and safety manager. "Winter storms bringing down branches are a big cause of power outages. Check around your property to see if any trees or branches could harm power lines if they fell. Some preventive work now could save more headaches and power outages later.

"Use caution when pruning trees. Don't use pruning tools or ladders near power lines. Always keep yourself and anything you're handling at least 10 feet away from overhead power lines. Never try to remove a branch that is tangled or lying across a power line. Instead, call Pacific Power at 1-888-221-7070. We'll be happy to remove it for you.

Some additional tips for fall safety:

Treat all electric lines with caution.

Use only wooden and fiberglass ladders. Metal ladders conduct electricity.

Never use electrical equipment or tools near a pool or other wet areas. Additionally, make sure outlets are equipped with a ground fault circuit interrupter, designed to automatically disconnect if the tool comes into contact with water.

Be aware and steer clear of overhead electrical wires when installing, removing, cleaning or repairing gutters.

Have help when installing or adjusting a satellite dish or antenna. Make sure you're working at least 10 feet away from overhead power lines.

Plant trees and shrubs away from meters, switching cabinets and boxed transformers. Vegetation that blocks electrical equipment makes repairs and maintenance challenging and sometimes dangerous for utility workers.

Underground power lines are just as dangerous as overhead ones. If your project involves digging, make sure the locations of underground power lines are marked. Call 811 to have underground utilities located and marked for free.