Think before you...

TAKE TO THE SKIES

UK Power Networks

DID YOU KNOW...

The CAA 1:250,000 map shows the major transmission lines BUT NOT any other high or low voltage overhead line?

Keep a careful look out for overhead electric power lines.
KEEP WELL AWAY

This leaflet provides a basic guide to maximise your chances of remaining safe when:

- Taking off
- Flying at low level
- Landing
- Making a forced landing

...in the vicinity of electrical overhead power lines.

LOOK UP
LOOK OUT

REMEMBER...

- Electricity systems carry voltages up to 400,000 volts. Even 230 volts (domestic voltage) can be **lethal**.
- Never assume that any electrical equipment is dead, even if it has fallen or broken.
- Power can be switched back on at any time without warning.
- Touching anything in contact with electrical equipment, even the lowest of voltages, can be fatal as electricity can jump gaps.
- Overhead power lines are often uninsulated (bare) and can carry high voltages. They can look like telephone wires, but **never** assume this is the case.
- Rubber boots **will not** protect you.
- Trees, ropes, suspension lines and water can conduct electricity.

THINK AHEAD

Before you take off

- Make sure you know where overhead lines are in the vicinity of your departure airfield.
- The CAA 1:250,000 map shows the major transmission lines, because of their height but does not show other high and low voltage overhead lines - notably those on wooden poles which are more difficult to see from the air.

- Check carefully in the airstrip guides e.g. Pooleys for notes about overhead lines near your destination airfield.

- Try and find out as much as possible about a new airstrip destination, including the presence of power lines in the area. Consider driving there first to personally inspect it. If power lines are present could you use an alternative airstrip?

- Always carry a mobile telephone when you fly so you can call emergency services if you have to land in an emergency.

During your flight

- If you are practising low flying, keep a special lookout for overhead lines.

- Regularly refer to your CAA 1:250,000 map looking for electricity transmission lines in your vicinity.

Final approach and landing out

- Remember that overhead lines can be very difficult to see from the air. Look for a row of supporting poles or pylons to indicate the route.

- Poles could be hidden behind trees and a ‘tee off’ line may come away at right angles across your intended landing field.

- If you need to make an emergency landing, remember to keep a look out for overhead lines on your approach and avoid them if at all possible.

FOR GLIDING

Each year the member clubs of the British Gliding Association and British Hang Gliding and Paragliding Association provide around 400,000 winch / auto tow launches, almost all accomplished without incident. However, there have been incidents where the launching cable has come into contact with overhead power lines either as a result of the launching cable drifting across the power line after release or being dropped by the glider after a launch cable break.

Such incidents expose aviators and the public to a serious risk of electrocution and the interruption of electricity supplies to large areas.

General Guidance

- Display a map showing electricity lines near the airfield or site on your notice board, site guide or in your briefing room.
- Include the emergency telephone number of your local electricity company on the notice board, site guide and in your list of telephone contacts.
- Do not rig or de-rig within 10 metres of an overhead line as long objects, battens spars etc. could contact the line.

Winch and Aerotow operations

- Position the winch and launch point to minimise launch cable drift.
- Use an appropriately sized cable drogue parachute to minimise drift.
- Consider earthing the winch.
- If a cable should fall across an overhead line, evacuate everyone in the vicinity of the cable and winch, then inform the local electricity company urgently, giving a precise location.
- Never attempt to go near or recover a cable that is in contact with an overhead line.
- Carefully select tug aircraft landing approaches to avoid a towline catching a power line.

WHAT TO DO IN AN EMERGENCY

If your aircraft comes into contact with an overhead line:

- **Assume** the line / wires are live, even if they are not sparking.
- **Remember** that, even if they are dead, the wires can become live again with no notice. This may happen automatically after a few seconds, or may be re-energised remotely up to several hours later if the electricity company is not aware that the line has been damaged.
- If you can, use your mobile telephone to call the emergency services. Give them your location as accurately as you can. Tell them that there are electrical wires involved and ask them to inform the electricity company.
- If your aircraft is in contact with an electrical wire or within 5 metres of a damaged overhead wire, then **stay inside** your aircraft until the emergency services or electricity company arrive, unless there is a real threat of fire.
- Once a wire is on the ground you do not have to touch it to be killed. The current may travel a significant distance through the ground and even further if the wire has fallen on a fence or other metallic objects. **Be aware, keep clear**.
- If you have to get out, then try and **jump clear** rather than stepping off the aircraft. Then move rapidly at least 10 metres away.
- The emergency services have been briefed on how to undertake rescues close to damaged overhead lines. An electrical engineer will confirm when the power has been turned off and the rescue can proceed safely.
- If suspended from, or tangled in wires, **do not** allow others to approach the aircraft until it is confirmed safe to do so by the electricity company.

DANGER OF DEATH

KEEP AWAY

FROM POWER LINES

Call the network operator

0800 587 3243

www.ukpowernetworks.co.uk

If you are unsure of your network operator then please visit www.energynetworks.org

UK Power Networks,
Registered office: Newington House, 237 Southwark Bridge Road, London SE1 6NP
Registered number: 7290590 registered in England and Wales

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