



Downed Power Lines and Vehicle Safety

Test your knowledge – Student Version

On a stormy night in July, 18-year-old Kevin Nixon was behind the wheel of his 2012 Volkswagen Jetta. He had just left a friend's birthday party in the neighboring town and was heading back home, a 20-minute drive on primarily open roads. The rain was fierce, and Kevin did his best to keep his eyes focused on the road. About 10 minutes into the drive, Kevin saw headlights coming from the other direction. Initially, he thought nothing of it. But as the cars approached one another, Kevin noticed the other vehicle swerving in and out of its lane. In an attempt to avoid a head-on collision, Kevin swerved at the last moment. He was unable to regain control of the car and it ran off the road, crashing head-on into a nearby utility pole. The airbags deployed, but luckily Kevin was unhurt. As he opened the driver-side door and prepared to step out and survey the damage, he noticed what looked like power lines draped across the hood of the car. Kevin panicked, having never experienced this situation in his young driving career.

Questions for Discussion A

- 1) **Why is this a dangerous situation?**
- 2) **What should Kevin do?**
- 3) **Are crashes involving utility poles common?**

Gina, a concerned passerby who witnessed the crash, parks her vehicle on the other side of the road and begins to approach Kevin's car to make sure he is safe. Kevin, through his window, notices Gina approaching.

Questions for Discussion B

- 1) **What should Kevin do?**
- 2) **What can happen if Gina gets too close to Kevin's vehicle?**

While waiting for help to arrive, smoke begins to pour into Kevin's vehicle, and he knows it will soon catch on fire.

Questions for Discussion C

- 1) **What are the proper steps to take in this situation? What specifically should Kevin do?**
- 2) **Aside from the presence of smoke and/or fire, are there any other situations in which Kevin should exit his vehicle?**