



CALTRAIN ELECTRIFICATION SAFETY

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

August 2022

OVERVIEW

Caltrain Electrification has been under construction since 2017, building California's first electrified commuter rail and the West's first diesel to electric rail system. It will transform the way people travel between San Francisco and Silicon Valley, providing faster, safer, more reliable service while enhancing equity and access for underserved communities and mitigating climate change. The project is replacing 75% of the existing aging diesel fleet with state-of-the-art electric trains and is installing 51-miles of clean infrastructure, including energized overhead wires.

Caltrain's most important responsibility is to maintain and provide safe standards for our riders, community, and workers. This includes proper management of the newly installed overhead electric lines along the corridor.

If you see a downed or otherwise damaged overhead wire, please report it to Transit Police at 1.877.SAF-RAIL (1.877.723.7245).

Q: Are the overhead wires dangerous?

A: Yes, the overhead wires carry 25,000 volts of electricity and should always be treated as live and dangerous. Touching an energized wire would result in serious injury or loss of life.

Q: What should I do if there is a downed or damaged wire?

A: If you see a downed or otherwise damaged overhead wire, stay at least 25 feet away and report it to Transit Police at 1.877.SAF-RAIL (1.877.723.7245).

Q: What happens if an object touches the wire?

A: Any object touching a wire, including trees, should be considered hazardous as it can serve as a conductor of electricity. Never approach overhead wires with things like ladders, antennas, balloons, and most importantly, yourself. It is illegal to intentionally damage or otherwise disrupt the overhead wires. If you see an object touching a wire, stay at least 25 feet away and report it to Transit Police at 1.877.SAF-RAIL (1.877.723.7245).



Q: What happens in the event of a planned or unplanned power outage?

A: Caltrain can continue to operate the electric trains on a reduced service level when there is a localized power outage. There are two Traction Power Facilities along the corridor that provide power to the overhead wires, one in San Jose and one in South San Francisco. If there is a region-wide power outage, electric trains may not be able to operate until power is restored.

Q: What is Caltrain doing to ensure trees do not damage the wires?

A: As a part of Caltrain's responsibility to safety, a tree trimming program was established to maintain a safe clearance from the power lines.

Q: Do vehicles crossing the tracks need to worry about overhead wires?

A: There is no hazard to vehicles crossing the tracks as the overhead lines are secured 22 feet above the tracks.

Q: How does heat affect the overhead wires?

A: Overhead wires can expand and contract depending on temperature changes. The Caltrain overhead wires include an automatic balance system that maintains proper tension of the wires.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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