

[Music]

(a white suv has crashed into a utility pole)

Bill Thompson (sitting in white suv): You've hit a utility pole, your airbag is deployed, but you seem to be okay. Your first instinct may be to get out of the vehicle and that instinct could get you killed. Before you do anything, look around for downed lines. If you see any lines on or near the vehicle sit tight, if possible call 9-1-1 and explain the situation. They'll get in touch with Dominion and local responders.

Bill Thompson: This is Bill Thompson, I've run into a utility pole on Jefferson Street. There are power lines on my car. There don't seem to be any sparks or fire anything. Thanks, I'll sit tight.

[Music]

Bill Thompson: (smoke begins streaming into the white suv through the vents) Well now this complicates things a bit. I may not have time to wait for help, so how do I get out safely? (exterior of suv. bill exits vehicle and touches the side of the suv) First thing is, pay attention to touch potential. Touch potential is the risk of electrocution based on one part of the body touching an energized object, like a car, while simultaneously touching the ground. Electricity flows from the vehicle through the body into the ground result: electrocution.

Bill Thompson: (suv door opens) So how do I get out? I have to jump and land with both feet together at the same time. (bill jumps out with both feet hitting the ground at the same time) So I'm out, but the danger is still present and simply walking away isn't the answer because of step potential. (bill takes one step) Because the ground is energized, electrical current can travel. For me, if my feet aren't close together, electrical current enters through one foot and out the other. The further apart my feet the higher the chance of being shocked.

Bill Thompson: Instead of walking, you need to shuffle using small steps, (bill slowly shuffles away from the car trying to keep his balance) keeping your feet as close together as you can. It might take longer, but you'll get more to where you need to go. This is the one time it's better to be The Tortoise than the hare. Keep shuffling until you are at least thirty feet away from your vehicle and wait for help.

Bill Thompson: One more thing, while you're waiting keep an eye out for those good Samaritans that might want to come to your aid. You need to alert them to your situation and make sure they keep their distance. If you encounter downed power lines, assume all downed power lines are energized. Do not drive over down power lines. If possible stay in your car. If in danger, jump away from your car and land with both feet together, shuffle away to safety, at least 30 feet.