



Pend Oreille County Public Utility District

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Pend Oreille PUD Reminds Public to Keep Signs Off Utility Poles

PEND OREILLE COUNTY, Wash. - Public Utility District No. 1 of Pend Oreille County (PUD) is reminding the public that attaching signs, posters, or other materials to utility poles is both unsafe and against Washington state law.

Under RCW 70.54.090, it is unlawful to attach advertising signs, posters, vending machines, or similar objects to utility poles without permission from the utility. Violations are considered a misdemeanor and can carry penalties of up to one year in jail and significant fines.

“Although it may seem harmless, posting signs on utility poles creates serious safety hazards for our crews,” said Stacie Maier, Director of Engineering & Operations for the PUD. “We’re not just seeing tape and staples. In some cases, people are driving nails, screws, or even bolts into poles. These objects can damage protective gear and make it dangerous and time-consuming for our crews to climb poles and perform repairs.”

In addition to damaging poles and putting crews at risk, the placement of signs poses risks to the public. Pend Oreille PUD crews have reported signs posted 15 to 20 feet high, sometimes directly adjacent to energized power lines.

“That’s incredibly dangerous,” Maier said. “Anyone climbing near live wires to hang a sign is putting themselves in serious danger of electrocution. We urge everyone to stay far away from our poles and equipment.”

Signs, fasteners, and other attachments can puncture or snag the insulated rubber gloves and safety gear that lineworkers rely on when handling high-voltage lines. A single small tear can put a worker’s life at risk.

The PUD encourages residents and organizations to seek alternative, lawful ways to advertise community events, business services, or political campaigns. Posting to utility poles is not only unsafe but also illegal.

“Our lineworkers already face a tough and dangerous job maintaining safe and reliable power for our community,” Maier added. “The last thing they need is added hazards created by something as avoidable as a sign. Posting on utility poles doesn’t just endanger our crews, it also puts the public at risk when people get too close to our lines to hang these signs.”

About Pend Oreille County Public Utility District

Pend Oreille PUD was established in 1936 and began operations in 1948. The PUD is governed by three locally elected Commissioners. A General Manager and staff operate the utility within policies set by the Board of Commissioners. The PUD has four operating systems: The electric system distributes electricity to the county, the production system produces power from the Box Canyon Hydroelectric Project, the water system consists of nine individual water distribution subdivisions, and the community network system provides wholesale broadband communication services. For more information visit: <http://popud.org>.