



BELIZE ELECTRICITY LIMITED

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BEL Appeals for Public Awareness of Electrical Hazards

Belize Electricity Limited (BEL) has requested the support of NEMO in cautioning the public of the life-threatening hazards caused by illegal and improper electrical connections. In separate instances over the weekend in Belize City, lives were put at risk: a house was extensively damaged and there was an avoidable power outage due to these unsafe electrical connections.

On Saturday, an extension wire connected directly from an electrical meter became immersed in water on the ground, causing a short circuit which led to a fire that damaged the property and threatened the lives of those in the immediate area.

On Sunday, lives were endangered when illegal electrical connections in the Antelope Street Extension Area caused exposed live wires to be laying in flood water. This presented risk of electric shock to any person making contact with the water and BEL was forced to disconnect power supply to the area to mitigate the hazard. NEMO personnel were unable to immediately access the area to render assistance to flood victims and this outage persisted for up to approximately 11 hours until the illegal connections could be safely removed.

Illegal and improper electrical connections exist in several communities countrywide. Since 2014, BEL has been working with the police to encourage residents of these communities to stop the risky and unsafe practice of illegally connecting to power lines. At the same time, BEL personnel have been going into these communities and informing residents that they can be safely connected to our electricity system through the Connecting Homes, Improving Lives (CHIL) Program. Under the CHIL Program, low-income residents may qualify for the installation of a free service entrance, which will allow their homes to be properly connected for power supply. Along with the CHIL Program, BEL has a Golden Citizen Program where it pays the monthly bill for senior citizens who are struggling to make their monthly payments.

Hundreds of households have been connected countrywide and BEL has plans to connect more households as long as the necessary infrastructures are in place to do so.

BEL is seeking the support of both the authorities and the general public to assist in raising awareness of the dangers of illegal power connections and promoting the services we have in place to provide universal access to electricity.

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