

# The Goretzka Case

## Allegheny Enery Sued After Power Line Falls, Hempfield Woman Dies

Carrie Goretzka Died Days Later At Pittsburgh Hospital

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HEMPFIELD TOWNSHIP, Pa. -- A Hempfield Township family is suing Allegheny Energy Inc. over the death of a woman who was injured when a power line fell outside her house.



A woman was shocked and critically injured when a power line fell into her Hempfield yard.

The victim -- identified as Carrie Goretzka, 39 -- was badly burned when neighbors said the line fell from a tree into the yard of her West Hempfield Drive home on June 2.

"I saw my neighbor laying there. She was all burnt up," said neighbor Bernadine Collins. "They said that the sparks and everything had come onto her body, and I heard her screaming and crying. I've been praying ever since this happened."

Emergency responders were unable to reach the victim until power crews arrived to shut off the electricity.

Attorney Shanin Specter said Goretzka's two children, ages 4 and 2, were witnesses as they were on the front steps of their house. The children were not injured.

At the time, a representative of the state Public Utility Commission told WTAE Channel 4 Action News that it was trying to determine what caused the 7200-volt line to fall.

"We're looking from any violation of public utility code or any PUC violation. The PUC will look for any past violations in that area...and that will all be included in the report," the representative said.

Channel 4 Action News was also told that the investigation could take up to a year.

"I have no idea at this point," Allegheny Power's Joe Grupp said on June 2.

Pennsylvania State Police are also involved in the investigation.

Goretzka's death was ruled an accident by the Allegheny County medical examiner's office, which made the ruling because the death happened while she was at UPMC Mercy hospital in Pittsburgh.