



**Consolidated Electric
Cooperative, Inc.**
Your Touchstone Energy® Partner 

Safety on the Farm

Dangerous situations can occur quickly on the farm. Make sure the long hours you work don't cause you to forget about safety, especially when working near power lines.

Farm grain augers, and many other types of farm equipment, are of such height and length that they become an excellent path to the ground should you fail to recognize the potential danger of a power line overhead.

Lightweight irrigation pipe can be an excellent conductor of electricity, and when raised in an upright position, can contact the power line causing you to become a fatal accident statistic.



1. Consider any overhead line dangerous. Keep objects at least 10 feet away from power lines.
2. Inspect your working areas for possible interference with overhead power lines.
3. Don't attempt to raise or move electric lines.
4. It's the law; call Ohio Utilities Protection Service (OUPS) at 811 before digging where power lines are buried, it's the law. Allow at least "48" hours but not more than ten working days before commencing excavation.
5. Report potential power line hazards to Consolidated Electric Cooperative.

Although you may have no power lines whatsoever in your fields, you certainly have them present in equipment storage areas and grain storage areas. Be sure the paths from equipment storage areas to the fields and from the fields to the grain storage areas are safe routes. There should be ample clearance for combines, pickers, augers, front end loaders, stackers or any other equipment you are moving about your farm. If there is some question about whether equipment will clear a power line conductor, assume that it won't and take measures to avoid any possible contact.

Look Up For Overhead Lines

Many farm workers are killed each year when their farm equipment makes contact with overhead power lines. These tragic accidents are preventable. Before heading back into the fields, CEC urges farm workers to review farm activities and work practices that take place around power lines.

"Make sure everyone who works on the farm knows the location of power lines and keeps farm equipment at least 10 feet away from them," said Jeff Jewell, Safety Manager for Consolidated Electric Cooperative. "Keep in mind, the minimum 10 foot distance is a 360-degree rule - below, to the side and above lines. It may take a little more time, but ensuring proper clearance can save lives."

"Many farm electrical accidents that involve power line contact happen when loading or preparing to transport equipment to fields, or while performing maintenance or repairs on farm machinery near power lines," notes Jeff. "It can be difficult to estimate distance and sometimes a power line is closer than it looks. A spotter or someone with a broader view can help."

Moving Equipment

Today's larger farms require transporting tractors and equipment to fields several miles away. Before transit, avoid raising the arms of planters, sprayers, cultivators, or truck beds near power lines.

Be aware of increased height when loading and transporting larger modern tractors. Also, many tractors are now equipped with radios and communications systems and have antennas extending from the cab to fifteen above the ground that could make contact with power lines.

Some other equipment safety considerations:

- Always lower portable augers or elevators to their lowest possible level - under 14 feet - before moving or transporting; use care when raising them.
- When moving large equipment or high loads near a power line, always use a spotter, or someone to help make certain that contact is not made with a line.
- Never attempt to raise or move a power line to clear a path!

As in any outdoor work, be careful not to raise any equipment such as ladders, poles, or rods into power lines. Remember, non-metallic materials such as lumber, tree limbs, tires, ropes, and hay will conduct electricity depending on dampness and dust and dirt contamination. Do not try to clear storm damage debris and limbs near or touching power lines or near fallen lines.

The overhead electric wires aren't the only electrical contact that can result in a serious incident. Pole guy wires are grounded to the neutral; but, when one of the guy wires is broken, it can cause an electric current disruption. This can make neutral wires anything but harmless. If you hit a guy wire and break it, call the Cooperative to fix it. Don't do it yourself. Report any damaged electrical equipment or downed power lines to Consolidated Electric Cooperative.

Equipment and Power

"It's also important for operators of farm equipment or vehicles to know what to do if the vehicle comes in contact with a power line," Jewell said. "It's almost always best to stay in the cab and call for help. Warn others who may be nearby to stay away and wait until the electric utility arrives to make sure power to the line is de-energized."

"If the power line is energized and you step outside, your body becomes the path and electrocution is the result," Jewell said. "Even if a power line has landed on the ground, there is still the potential for the area nearby to be energized. Stay inside the vehicle unless there's fire or imminent risk of fire."

In that case, the proper action is to jump - not step - with both feet hitting the ground at the same time. Do not allow any part of your body to touch the equipment and the ground at the same time. Continue to shuffle or hop to safety, keeping both feet together as you leave the area.

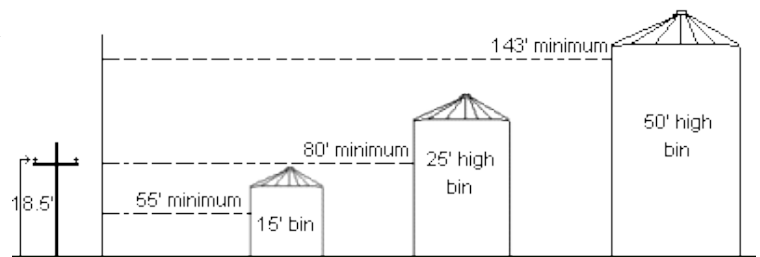
Once you get away from the equipment, never attempt to get back on or even touch the equipment. Many electrocutions occur when the operator dismounts and, realizing nothing has happened, tries to get back on the equipment.

Farmers may want to consider moving or burying power lines around buildings or busy pathways where many farm activities take place. If planning a new building or farm structure, contact the cooperative for information on minimum safe clearances from overhead and underground power lines.

ADDING NEW GRAIN BINS

If you are planning the construction of any new grain bins, be sure to take the placement of existing power lines into account and contact the Cooperative before your plans are finalized. The National Electric Safety Code has published new regulations concerning electric lines near grain bins. We will be glad to provide information on the new code.

The Cooperative cannot provide electric service to any grain bin built near an existing line which does not meet the clearance requirement. If you have any questions call the Cooperative at (419)-947-3055 or 1-(800)-421-5863.



Don't Take Chances...Play It Safe

So play it safe, and remind your coworkers and neighbors to practice the "10-foot rule," too. The rule refers to the distance extending 10 feet in every direction from any power line. If you are doing any work within 10 feet of an overhead power line, please contact the Cooperative first. Also, call 811 before digging in the vicinity of an underground power line.