

TAILGATE TOPIC



TOPIC: Electrical Safety

OVERVIEW: The National Safety Council reports an average of 60 electrocutions on U.S. farms every year. Farms take full advantage of electrical energy in the daily routine and special farming. Like any form of energy, electricity can hurt or kill if it is not used safely. Over the years, accidental electrical contacts have taken the lives or seriously injured farmers, their families and farm workers.

TALKING POINTS:

- Most overhead power lines have no protective insulation. Any physical or equipment contact with them could be dangerous.
- Non-metallic materials such as lumber, tree limbs, tires, ropes, straw and hay, can conduct electricity depending on the moisture content and surface contamination.
- When people or any objects touch or come too close to a power line, there is an instant flow of electricity through them to ground.
- The flow of electricity through the human body can burn, severely injure or cause death. Less than one ampere of electricity can kill.
- Always look for overhead power lines and underground power lines before you start working. Notify all employees of their location.
- Never raise irrigation pipes into the air. Carry irrigation pipes, ladders, and tools parallel to the ground to avoid hitting power lines.
- Always stay at least 10 feet from overhead power lines when working using booms, harvesters, dump trucks, tools or equipment.

- If you must work within 10 feet of overhead power lines then contact the electric company and clearly mark boundaries to keep workers and equipment a safe distance from overhead lines.
- Use a spotter to help maintain clearance near overhead power lines.
- Call Underground Service Alert (USA) at 811 at least two days before you dig, till, or move dirt in any way. USA will mark underground utilities so you can work safely.

REVIEW QUESTIONS:

1. How many electrocutions on average are reported on farms each year? (Answer: 60)
2. How many feet away should you work from overhead power lines, at a minimum? (Answer: 10 feet)
3. What can happen when the flow of electricity goes through the human body? (Answer: It can burn, severely injure or cause death)
4. What type of equipment or tools can come into contact with overhead power lines? (Answer: Irrigation pipes, ladders, tools parallel to the ground)

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