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A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

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ACEC ENCOURAGES SAFE PRACTICES DURING SPRING PLANTING SEASON

POSTVILLE, IA – Farming is perennially near the top of the list of the most dangerous jobs in the United States, according to Bureau of Labor Statistics. One hazard faced by farm workers, while they are feeling the pressure to get the crops in the ground, is electricity and the equipment that carries it to homes and businesses. However, with proper planning and education, risks of accidents involving electricity can be greatly reduced.

“There are steps farmers can take to help keep themselves and workers safe when working around electricity,” said Jason Troendle, Allamakee-Clayton Electric Cooperative’s Director of Operations and Engineering. “One critical part of safety around electricity is awareness. With the use of large equipment, farmers can easily find themselves in dangerous proximity to overhead lines. Being aware of the location of those wires can help reduce accidents.”

The cooperative urges farmers and farm workers to remember these tips to stay safe:

- Keep a 10-foot minimum distance around power lines. That means 10 feet above, below, and to the side of power lines.
- Use a spotter when moving machinery around the farm. It can be difficult to judge how close a piece of machinery is from the driver’s seat.
- Use caution when handing long items such as irrigation pipe, ladders, and rods.
- Be aware of increased height when loading and transporting tractors on trailer beds. Many tractors are now equipped with radios and communications systems that have very tall antennas extending from the cab that could make contact with power lines.
- Avoid raising the arms of planters, cultivators, or truck beds near power lines.
- Never attempt to raise or move a power line to clear a path.
- Remember, even non-metallic materials such as lumber, tree limbs, tires, ropes, and hay will conduct electricity depending on dampness, dust, and dirt contamination.

Overhead electric wires are not the only source of electrical contact that can result in a serious incident. Pole guy wires are used to support poles, wires and overhead equipment. However, when one of the guy wires is broken, it can cause poles to break and wires could get tangled, causing a potential safety concern. If you hit a guy wire and break it, call the utility to fix it. Do not do it yourself. When dealing with electrical poles and wires, always call the electric utility.



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“If you do find yourself in a vehicle that has made contact with a power line, it is critical that you know what to do. If you don’t know the proper procedures for getting out of the cab, you could be injured or killed by electricity,” said Troendle.

The only reason to exit a vehicle that has come in contact with overline lines is if the vehicle is on fire or there is a threat for fire. If that happens, jump out of the vehicle with your feet together. It is important not to touch the ground and vehicle at the same time. Keeping your feet together, hop to safety away from the equipment.

Photo: Tractor

Cutline: Those entering the fields this spring are urged to be aware of what’s around them to avoid getting injured this planting season.

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