

Look up for hazards during harvest

When the crops are ready to be harvested, farmers have only a window of time—between weather events, equipment breakdowns, and life events—to get the best quality crop out of the field. To make the most of this time, farm workers are trying to get as much work done as possible.

One of the biggest hazards for farmers is posed by power lines. Large equipment can snag overhead wires, cut guy wires or even break off electric poles.

To stay safe around overhead power lines, farm workers should:

- Use a spotter when operating large machinery near power lines.
- Use care when raising augers or the bed of grain trucks around power lines.
- Keep equipment at least 10 feet from power lines — at all times, in all directions.
- Inspect the height of farm equipment to determine clearance.
- Always remember to lower extensions when moving loads.
- Never attempt to move a power line out of the way or raise it for clearance.
- If a power line is sagging or low, call Rural Electric Convenience Cooperative.

If contact is made with a power line, stay on the equipment. Warn others to stay away from the equipment and the wires, and call 9-1-1. Do not leave until the utility crew says it is safe to do so. The *only* reason to exit is if the equipment is on fire. If this is the case, jump off the



equipment with your feet together, without touching the ground and vehicle at the same time. Then, still keeping your feet together, hop to safety as you leave the area.

Some additional safety tips for electrical safety around the farm include:

- Do not use metal poles when breaking up bridged grain inside and around grain bins.
- Always hire qualified electricians for any electrical issues.
- Do not use equipment with frayed cables.

“Farming is a dangerous business,” says Dana Smith, RECC’s Director of Member and Public Relations. “Electricity is a great tool to help get the work done, but it can take your life in an instant if you don’t pay attention and keep a safe distance from it!”



Free safety decals

To help farmers and their employees remember to look up when operating large equipment, Rural Electric offers free decals that can be placed as a reminder on augers, combines and trucks. Just call our office at (217) 438-6197 or email a request to us at recc@recc.coop. We want to help you farm safely!

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