



Harvest Workers Urged Caution to Yield Fewer Electrical Accidents

Harvest season can yield higher numbers of electrocution, shock and burn injuries. Nationwide, dozens of agricultural workers are electrocuted and hundreds more injured in electrical accidents each year.

Equipment contacting overhead power lines is the leading cause of farm electrocution accidents in the Midwest. Many of these accidents occur near grain bins, when augers make contact with power lines.

Make sure everyone who works on the farm knows the location of power lines. Federal regulations require a 10-foot working clearance from any power lines at all times. In addition, much greater clearances to grain bins are required, depending on the size of the bin. Ensuring proper clearance can save lives.

Some equipment safety considerations:

- Always lower portable augers or elevators to their safe transporting level before moving; 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 sure proper clearances are maintained.

- Be aware of increased height when loading and transporting larger modern tractors with higher antennas.

- Never attempt to raise or move a power line to clear a path!

If equipment comes in contact with power lines, stay inside the cab and call for help. Tell others to stay away until utility personnel arrive at the scene to make sure power is disconnected. If there is risk of fire and you must leave the area, 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 hop or shuffle 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.

SIEC provides “LOOK UP FIRST! Electrocution Hazard” safety decals for farmers and equipment operators upon request. It is very important all farm workers and seasonal employees are informed of electrical hazards and trained in proper procedures to avoid injury. For more information on farm and home electrical safety, visit www.SafeElectricity.org or www.siec.coop. For safety decals, call SIEC at 1-800-762-1400.

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