

Working on a farm today involves using many different types of equipment and tools. Farm machinery comes in a variety of shapes and sizes for all types of jobs. Contacting or coming too close to overhead or underground power lines can be very dangerous. To prevent electrical contact and avoid serious injury or death be sure to:

- know where overhead and underground power lines are located
- keep all equipment away from overhead power lines
- locate underground power lines or wires prior to commencing work

Electrocution Hazards

The most common risk of electrocutions comes from contact with overhead power lines. Overhead power lines are bare and getting too close or contacting them will create a path to ground for electricity. Always treat overhead power lines as if they were energized.

Safe Distances While Passing Under Power Lines
Never measure line heights yourself. A Maritime Electric official can determine through a site inspection the height clearance needed for equipment travelling under the power line. The required clearance must be maintained between the power line and the top of the equipment when travelling under it.



Contact with Power Lines

Despite all precautions, equipment sometimes comes into contact with power lines. It is important to know how to handle these situations.

- If your tractor or equipment comes into contact with power lines, if possible try and move the equipment away from the contacted lines to a safe distance of at least 15 metres.
- If the tractor or equipment cannot be moved, stay inside or on the equipment until emergency personnel arrive. If someone approaches tell them to stay away and contact 9-1-1.
- If there is a fire and you must leave the tractor or equipment. Jump and land with both feet together. Never touch the ground and the machinery at the same time. Move away by shuffling your feet side-by-side or hopping. Do this until you are at least 15 metres away.

Be sure to perform a thorough inspection on any equipment that has been involved with electrical contact. Tires, hydraulic components, electrical and other parts may be damaged. As required, use the services of qualified personal to inspect potentially damaged equipment.

Downed power lines are very dangerous. Never attempt to move a downed power line or anything that may be touching that line. Always assume

the downed power line is energized. If you see a downed power line, call Maritime Electric and warn others to stay away at least 15 metres until qualified personnel shows up to fix the problem.

Ground conditions can increase the hazard area – so if the conditions are wet or steel fencing or guard rails are present – increase the distance that you stay clear and warn others to stay clear.

Employee Training on the Farm

It is extremely important to train any newly hired farm workers in electrical safety on the farm and ensure seasonal employees are re-trained as often as needed. Be sure to explain:

- the risks associated with overhead and underground power lines;
- locations where overhead lines cross fields and over vehicle access point;
- how to avoid electrical injury on the farm; and
- what to do if an overhead line is contacted.





- Locate underground lines before any digging operation.
- Consider the possibility of underground utility supplies for new or replaced power lines.
- Determine risks for potential electrical shock and restrict access to that area.
- Identify required safe limit distances. Design routes to avoid approaching safe limit distances.
- If you have a standby power system, ensure it is properly installed and review its location, operation and importance with all workers.
- Do not attempt to raise or move a power line – call Maritime Electric.
- Used qualified, licensed electricians for work on electrical systems.
- Remember – non-metallic materials like lumber, rubber, trees, rope and other semi-conductors may all conduct electricity.
- Consult the Prince Edward Island Occupational Health and Safety Act and the Farm Safety Code of Practice for additional farm safety information.

Avoiding Injury and Dangerous Situations

Be aware of overhead and underground power lines. Electrocutation can occur when objects or equipment come too close or contact power lines. You don't even need to be touching the power line as electricity can arc if you are the quickest way to the ground.

- Apply safety decals to all equipment that may pose electrical hazards and explain the hazards to persons who work with the equipment.
- Inspect farm equipment for transport height and know the clearance required to allow safe passage under power lines.
- Equipment such as grain augers and sprayers must be put in the lowered position before moving them around electric wires. Keep ladders, antennas, kites and poles away from power lines.
- Care should be taken when stringing fence wire along the same route as overhead power lines. Avoid stringing fence where it may spring and come into contact with overhead lines, poles or power line attachments.

Contact Us

If you are interested in having a Maritime Electric employee deliver an Electrical Safety in the Workplace presentation please contact us.

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All the time.



Telephone: 1-800-670-1012
Email: safety@maritimeelectric.com
maritimeelectric.com



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