

Electrical Safety

Electricity is important on the farm and we all have experienced the problems that occur when a storm cuts off our supply for even a short period of time. It's great to have electrical power, but that power should be respected for the hazard it can be. Lack of knowledge and skill are the leading cause of incidents involving electricity. Every year, trained professionals may take only one shortcut, make one mistake, or take one chance that could maim, disfigure or cost them their life. Electrical shock can cause flesh burns or breathing to stop. Cardiac arrest could occur if the electrical impulses in the body that control your heart are disrupted by an outside current of electricity.

There are additional concerns for safe electrical use on the farm. Farmers depend on many tools that are powered by electricity. Some farm implements, like augers, are tall and can come into contact with overhead electrical wires. Most overhead power lines on a farm carry 7,200 volts. Any contact with this much electrical current could easily be fatal. Make sure overhead power lines are well maintained and have adequate clearance to avoid contact with ladders, grain augers, and other machinery. Children may be even less aware of the unseen dangers of electricity.

Keep yourself and your family safe when around electricity. Follow these rules.

- Keep face plates on switches and outlet.
- Keep electrical panels free of dust and debris.
- Keep electrical panels covered to reduce shock and fire hazard.
- Use properly maintained tools and equipment that is double insulated.
- Do not use electrical tools around water.
- Equip the shop area with Ground Fault Circuit Interrupters and use 3-prong grounding plugs.
- Use undamaged electrical cords and do not carry tools by their cords.
- Grip the plug, not the cord, to unplug a tool.
- Switch off and unplug a tool before you change parts or clean it, or if it begins to smoke or burn.
- Instruct children in proper behavior around and respect of electricity.

Keep everyone safe around electricity. Prevent the electricity we need so much from harming the ones we love the most.

