

IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY

Extension and Outreach

September 16, 2016

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ELECTROCUTIONS CAN HAPPEN IN AN INSTANT

Look up for electrocution hazards and avoid contact with power lines

AMES, Iowa— During National Farm Safety and Health Week, Sept., 18-24, Iowa State University Extension and Outreach wants to remind everyone to look up and avoid contact with power lines to prevent farm injuries and deaths.

This is the time of year when oversized, tall equipment such as portable grain augers and combines are moved from place to place on the farmstead, or are transported on public roads. Any time this type of equipment is moved there is a risk of contact with overhead power lines.

“It is important to treat all power lines above or those that have fallen as energized,” said Charles Schwab, ISU Extension and Outreach safety specialist.

Use the following precautions to reduce the potential electrocution hazards on the farm:

- Maintain at least ten feet of clearance from any overhead lines.
- Know where all overhead power lines are located and inform workers about their locations.
- Plan routes between fields, to bins and elevators, and on public roads so that low-hanging power lines are avoided.
- Lower all portable grain augers before moving, no matter how short the travel distance.
- Be sure everyone on the farm knows what to do in an electrical emergency.

“If your combine or tractor connects with a power line, stay put, unless you’re in immediate danger from a fire or other hazard,” Schwab said. “If you must get off the equipment, then jump as far away from the machinery as possible and after landing, move further away by shuffling your feet.”

The goal is never to touch the earth (ground) and the equipment at the same time and is why you jump off the equipment. Shuffle your feet because long striding steps can create enough electrical potential for a shock. Never go back and touch the equipment until power to the utility line is turned off and you have been given the clearance by the electrical company.

Related Publications:

<https://store.extension.iastate.edu/Product/Reduce-fires-with-electrical-safety-Safe-Farm>

<https://store.extension.iastate.edu/Product/Electrocution-hazards-on-the-farm-Safe-Farm>

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